











# DRAKE

## AN ENGLISH EPIC

*BOOKS I.-III.*

BY

ALFRED NOYES

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MCMVI

*It is the Author's hope to complete this  
Poem in twelve Books. But each part, as it  
is published, will be complete in itself.*

Uttarpara Jaikrishna Public Library  
Accn. No. 948 Date 7.1.74

AM978

*TO*

***RUDOLPH CHAMBERS LEHMANN.***



# D R A K E.

## EXORDIUM.

WHEN on the highest ridge of that strange  
land,  
Under the cloudless blinding tropic blue,  
Drake and his band of swarthy seamen stood  
With ~~With~~ dazed eyes gazing round them, emerald  
fans  
Of palm that fell like fountains over cliffs  
Of gorgeous red anana bloom obscured  
Their sight on every side. Illustrious gleams  
Of rose and green and gold streamed from  
the plumes

That flashed like living rainbows through the glades.

Piratic glints of musketoon and sword,  
The scarlet scarves around the tawny throats,  
The bright brass ear-rings in the sun-black ears,

And the calm faces of the negro guides  
Opposed their barbarous bravery to the noon;  
Yet a deep silence dreadfully besieged  
Even those mighty hearts upon the verge  
Of the undiscovered world. Behind them lay  
The old earth ~~they~~ knew. In front they  
could not see

What lay beyond the ridge. Only ~~they~~  
heard

Cries of the painted birds troubling the heat  
And shivering through the woods; till Francis  
Drake

Plunged through the hush, took hold upon  
a tree,

The tallest near them, and clomb upward,  
branch  
By branch.

And lo, as he swung clear above  
The steep-down forest, on his wondering eyes  
Mile upon mile of rugged shimmering gold  
Burst the unknown immeasurable sea.  
Then he descended ; and with a new voice  
Vowed that, God helping, he would one day  
plough  
Those virgin waters with an English keel.

So here, before the unattempted task,  
Ab~~e~~e the Golden Ocean of my dream  
I clomb and saw in splendid pageant pass  
The wild adventures and heroic deeds  
Of England's ~~epic~~ age, a vision lit  
With mighty prophecies, fraught with a doom  
Worthy the great Homeric roll of song,  
Yet all unsung and unrecorded quite

By those who might have touched with  
Raphael's hand  
The large imperial legend of our race,  
Ere it brought forth the braggarts of an  
hour,  
Self-worshippers who love their imaged  
strength,  
And as a symbol for their own proud selves  
Misuse the sacred name of this dear land,  
While England to the Empire of her soul  
Like some great Prophet passes through the  
crowd  
That cannot understand; for he must climb  
Up to that sovran thunder-smitten peak  
Where he shall grave and trench on adamant  
The Law that God shall utter by the still  
Small voice, not by the whirlwind or the fire.  
There labouring for the Highest in himself  
He shall achieve the good of all mankind;  
And from that lonely Sinai shall return

Triumphant o'er the little gods of gold  
That rule their little hour upon the plain.  
Oh, thou blind master of these opened eyes  
Be near me, therefore, now; for not in pride  
I lift lame hands to this imperious theme;  
But yearning to a power above mine own  
Even as a man might lift his hands in  
• prayer.

Or as a child, perchance, in those dark days  
When London lay beleaguered and the axe  
Flashed out for Rome in England; and the  
blood

Of martyrs made a purple path for Spain  
Up to the throne of Mary; as a child  
Gathering with friends upon a winter's morn  
For some mock fight between the hateful  
prince

Philip and Thomas Wyatt, all at once  
Might see in gorgeous ruffs embastioned  
Popinjay plumes and slouching hats of Spain,

Gay shimmering silks and rich encrusted  
    gems,  
Gold collars, rare brocades, and sleek trunk-  
    hose  
The Ambassador and peacock courtiers come  
Strutting along the white snow-strangled  
    street,  
A walking plot of scarlet Spanish flowers,-  
And with one cry a hundred boyish hands  
Put them to flight with snowballs, while the  
    wind  
All round their Spanish ears hissed like a  
    flight  
Of white-winged geese; so may I wage, per-  
    chance  
A mimic war with all my heart in it,  
Munitoned with mere perishable snow,  
Which mightier hands one day will urge  
    with steel.  
Yet may they still remember me as I

## EXORDIUM.

7

Remember, with one little laugh of love,  
That child's game, this were wealth enough  
for me.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my  
prayer;

Help me that I may tell the enduring tale  
Of that great sea-man, good at need, who  
first

Sailed round this globe and made one little  
isle,

One little isle against that huge Empire  
Of Spain whose might was paramount on  
earth,

O'ertopping Babylon, Nineveh, Greece, and  
Rome,

Carthage and all huge Empires of the past,  
He made this little isle, against the world,  
Queen of the earth and sea. Nor this alone  
The theme; for, in a mightier strife engaged

Even then he knew, he fought for the new  
    faiths,  
Championing our manhood as it rose  
And cast its feudal chains before the seat  
Of kings; nay, in a mightier battle yet  
He fought for the soul's freedom, fought the  
    fight  
Which, though it still rings in our wonder-  
    ing ears,  
Was won then and for ever—that great  
    war,  
That last Crusade of Christ against His  
    priests,  
Wherein Rome fell behind a thunderous roar  
Of ocean triumph over burning ships  
And shattered fleets, while England, Eng-  
    land rose,  
Her white cliffs laughing out across the  
    waves,  
Victorious over all her enemies.

And while he won the world for her domain,  
Her loins brought forth, her fostering bosom  
fed

Souls that have swept the spiritual seas  
From heaven to hell, and justified her crown.  
For round the throne of great Elizabeth  
Verulam, Burleigh, Sidney, Spenser, More,  
Clustered like stars, rare Jonson like the  
crown

Of Cassiopeia, Marlowe ruddy as Mars,  
And over all those mighty hearts arose  
The soul of Shakespeare brooding far and  
wide

Beyond our small horizons, like a light  
Thrown from a vaster sun that still illumines  
Tracts which the arc of our increasing day  
Must still leave undiscovered, unexplored.

Mother and love, fair England, hear my  
prayer,

*As thou didst touch the heart and light the  
flaine*

Of wonder in those eyes which first awoke  
To beauty and the sea's adventurous dream  
Three hundred years ago, three hundred  
years,

And five long decades, in the leafy lanes  
Of Devon, where the tallest trees that bore  
The raven's matted nest had yielded up  
Their booty, while the perilous branches  
swayed

Beneath the boyish privateer, the king  
Of many young companions, Francis Drake;  
So hear me and so help, for more than his  
My need is, even than when he first set sail  
Upon that wild adventure with three ships  
And three-score men from grey old Plymouth  
Sound,

Not knowing if he went to life or death,  
Nor caring greatly, so that he were true

To his own sleepless and unfaltering soul  
*Which could not choose but hear the ringing call*

Across the splendours of the Spanish Main  
From ever fading, ever new horizons,  
And shores beyond the sunset and the sea.

Mother and sweetheart, England; from whose  
breast,

With all the world before them, they went  
forth,

Thy seamen, o'er the wide uncharted waste,  
Wider than that Ulysses roamed of old,  
Even as the wine-dark Mediterranean  
Is wider than some tide-relinquished pool  
Among its rocks, yet none the less explored  
To greater ends than all the pride of Greece  
And pomp of Rome achieved; if my poor  
song

Now spread too wide a sail, forgive thy son

*And lover, for thy love was ever wont  
To lift men up in pride above themselves  
To do great deeds which of themselves alone  
They could not; thou hast led the unfalter-  
ing feet  
Of even thy meanest heroes down to death,  
Lifted poor knights to many a great emprise,  
Taught them high thoughts, and though they  
kept their souls  
Lowly as little children, bidden them lift  
Eyes unappalled by all the myriad stars  
That wheel around the great white throne of  
God.* •

## BOOK I.

Now through the great doors of the Council-

• room

Magnificently streamed in rich array

The peers of England, regal of aspect

And grave. Their silence waited for the  
Queen :

And even now she came; and through their  
midst,

Low as they bowed, she passed without a  
smile

And took her royal seat. A bodesful hush

Of huge anticipation gripped all hearts,

Compressed all brows, and loaded the broad  
noon

With gathering thunder: none knew what  
the hour  
Might yet bring forth; but the dark fire of  
war  
Smouldered in every eye; for every day  
The Council met debating how to join  
Honour with peace, and every day new tales  
Of English wrongs received from the red  
hands  
Of that gigantic Empire, insolent  
Spain, spurred fiercer resentments up like  
steeds  
Revolting, on the curb, foaming for battle,  
In all men's minds, against whatever odds.  
On one side of the throne great Walsingham,  
A lion of England, couchant, watchful, calm,  
Was now the master of opinion: all  
Drew to him. Even the hunchback Burleigh  
smiled  
With half-ironic admiration now,

As in the presence of the Queen they met  
Amid the sweeping splendours of her court,  
A cynic smile that seemed to say, “I, too,  
Would fain regain that forthright heart of  
fire;

Yet statesmanship is but a smoother name  
For the superior cunning which ensures  
Victory.” And the Queen, too, knowing her  
strength

And weakness, though her woman’s heart  
leaped out

To courage, yet with woman’s craft preferred  
The subtler strength of Burleigh; for she  
knew

“Mary of Scotland waited for that war  
To strike her in the side for Rome; she  
knew

How many thousands lurked in England still  
Remembering Rome and bloody Mary’s reign.  
France o’er a wall of bleeding Huguenots

Watched for an hour to strike. Against all  
these

What shield could England raise, this little  
isle,—

Out-matched, outnumbered, perilously near  
Utter destruction ?

So the long debate  
Proceeded.

All at once there came a cry  
Along the streets and at the palace-gates  
And at the great doors of the Council-room !  
Then through the pikes and halberds a voice  
rose

Imperative for entrance, and the guards  
Made way, and a strange whisper surged  
around,

And through the peers of England thrilled the  
blood

Of Agincourt as to the foot of the throne  
Came Leicester, for behind him as he came

A seaman stumbled, travel-stained and torn,  
Crying for justice, and gasped out his tale.  
"The Spaniards," he moaned, "the Inquisition!

They have taken all my comrades, all our crew,

And flung them into dungeons: there they lie  
Waiting for England, waiting for their Queen!

Will you not free them? I alone am left!

All London is afire with it, for this  
Was one of your chief city merchant's  
ships—

The *Pride of London*, one of Osborne's ships!  
But there is none to help them! I escaped  
With shrieks of torment ringing in these  
ears,

The glare of torture-chambers in these eyes  
That see no faces anywhere but blind  
Blind faces, each a bruise of white that  
smiles

In idiot agony, washed with sweat and blood,  
The face of some strange thing that once  
    was man,

And now can only turn from side to side  
Babbling like a child, with mouth agape,  
And crying for help where there is none to  
    hear

Save those black wizards in the furnace-glow,  
Moving like devils at their hellish trade. . . .”  
He paused; his memory sickened, his brain  
    swooned

Back into that wild glare of obscene pain!  
Once more to his ears and nostrils horribly  
    crept

The hiss and smell of shrivelling human flesh!  
His dumb stare told the rest: his head sank  
    down;

He bowed; he fell; he strove in agony  
With what all hideous words must leave  
    untold;

While Leicester vouched him, “This man’s  
tale is true ! ”

But like a gathering storm a windy moan  
Of passion, like a tiger’s, slowly crept  
From the grey lips of Walsingham. “ My  
Queen,  
Will you not free them ? ”

Then Elizabeth,  
Whose name is one for ever with the name  
Of England, rose ; and in her face the gleam  
Of justice that makes anger terrible  
Shone, and she stretched her glittering sceptre  
forth .

And spoke, with distant empires in her eyes.

“ My lords, this is the last cry they shall wring  
From English lips unheeded : we will have  
Such remedies for this as all the world  
Shall tremble at ! ”

And, on that night, while Drake

Close in his London lodging lay concealed  
Until he knew if it were peace or war  
With Spain (for he had struck on the high  
seas  
At Spain; and well he knew if it were  
peace  
His blood would be made witness to that  
bond,  
And he must die a pirate's death or fly  
Westward once more), there all alone, he  
pored  
By a struggling rushlight o'er a well-thumbed  
chart  
Of magic islands in the enchanted seas,  
Dreaming, as boys and poets only dream  
With those that see God's wonders in the  
deep,  
Perilous visions of those palmy keys,  
Cocoa-nut islands, parrot-haunted woods,  
Crisp coral reefs and blue shark-finned lagoons

Fringed with the creaming foam, mile upon  
    mile

Of mystery. Dream after dream went by,  
Colouring the brown air of that London  
    night .

With many a mad miraculous romance.

There, suddenly, some augury, some flash  
Showed him a coming promise, a strange  
    hint,

Which, though he played with it, he scarce  
    believed;

Strange as in some dark cave the first fierce  
    gleam

Of pirate gold to some forlorn maroon

Who tiptoes to the heap and glances round  
Askance, and dreads to hear what erst he  
    longed .

To hear—some voice to break the hush; but  
    bathes

Both hands with childish laughter in the gold,

And lets it trickle through his fevered palms,  
And begins counting half a hundred times  
And loses count each time for sheer delight  
And wonder in it; meantime, if he knew,  
Passing the cave-mouth, far away, beyond  
The still lagoon, the coral reef, the foam  
And the white fluttering chatter o' the birds,  
A sail that might have saved him comes and  
goes

Unseen across the blue Pacific sea.

So Drake, too, played with fancies; but that  
sail

Passed not unseen, for suddenly ~~there~~ came  
A firm and heavy footstep to the door,  
Then a loud knocking; and, at first, he  
thought

“ I am a dead man: there is peace with  
Spain,  
And they are come to lead me to my doom.”  
But, as he looked across one shoulder, pride

Checking the fuller watch for what he feared,  
The door opened; and cold as from the sea  
The night rushed in, and there against the  
gloom,  
Clad, as it seemed, with wind and cloud  
and rain,      :  
There loomed a stately form and high grim  
face  
Loaded with deadly thoughts of iron war—  
Walsingham,—in one hand he held a map  
Marked with red lines; the other hand held  
down  
The rich, encrusted hilt of his great sword.  
Then Drake rose, and the other cautiously  
• Closing the door drew near the flickering  
light,  
And spread his map out on the table, saying—  
“Mark for me here the points whereat the  
King  
Philip of Spain may best be wounded, mark

The joints of his harness ;" and Drake looked  
at him

Thinking, "If he betray me, I am dead."

But the soldier met his eyes and, with a  
laugh,

Drake, quivering like a bloodhound in the  
leash,

Stooped, with his finger pointing thus and  
thus—

"Here would I guard, here would I lie in  
wait,

Here would I strike him through the breast  
and throat."

And as he spoke he kindled, and began  
To set forth his great dreams, and high  
romance

Rose like a moon reflecting the true sun  
Unseen; and as the full round moon indeed  
Rising behind a mighty mountain-chain  
Will shadow forth in outline grim and black

Its vast and ragged edges, so that moon  
Of high romance rose greatly shadowing  
forth

The grandeur of his dreams, until their might  
Dawned upon Walsingham, and he, too, saw  
For a moment of muffled moonlight and wild  
cloud.

The vision of the imperious years to be!  
But suddenly Drake paused as one who  
strays

Beyond the bounds of caution, paused and  
cursed

His tongue for prating like a moon-struck  
boy's.

•“I am mad,” he cried, “I am mad to  
babble so!”

Then Walsingham drew near him with strange  
eyes

And muttered slowly, “Write that madness  
down;

Ay, write it down, that madman's plan of  
thine;

Sign it, and let me take it to the Queen."

But the weather-wiser seaman warily  
Answered him, " If it please Almighty God  
To take away our Queen Elizabeth,  
Seeing that she is mortal as ourselves,  
England might then be leagued with Spain,  
and I  
Should here have sealed my doom. I will  
not put  
My pen to paper."

So, across the charts,  
With that dim light on each grim countenance  
The seaman and the courtier subtly fenced  
With words and thoughts, but neither would  
betray  
His whole heart to the other. At the last  
Walsingham gripped the hand of Francis  
Drake

And left him wondering.

On the third night came  
A messenger from Walsingham who bade  
Drake to the Palace where, without one  
word,

The statesman met him in an anteroom  
And led him, with flushed cheek and beating  
heart,

Along a mighty gold-gloomed corridor  
Into a high-arched chamber, hung with tall  
Curtains of gold-fringed silk and tapestries  
From Flanders looms, whereon were flowers  
and beasts

And forest-work, great knights, with hawk  
on hand,

Riding for ever on their glimmering steeds  
Through bowery glades to some immortal  
face

Beyond the fairy fringes of the world.

A silver lamp swung softly overhead,

Fed with some perfumed oil that shed abroad  
Delicious light and fragrances as rare  
As those that stirred faint wings at eventide  
Through the King's House in Lebanon of  
old.

Into a quietness as of fallen bloom  
Their feet sank in that chamber; and, all  
round,  
Soft hills of Moorish cushions dimly drowsed  
On glimmering crimson couches. Near the  
lamp  
An ebony chess-board stood inlaid with  
squares  
Of ruby and emerald, garnished with cinque-  
foils  
Of silver, bears and ragged staves: the men,  
Likewise of precious stones, were all arrayed—  
Bishops and knights and elephants and  
pawns—  
As for a game. Sixteen of them were set

In silver white, the other sixteen gilt.

Now, as Drake gazed upon an arras, nigh  
The farther doors, whereon was richly wrought  
The picture of that grave and lovely queen  
Penelope, with cold hands weaving still  
The unending web, while in an outer court  
The broad-limbed wooers basking in the sun  
On purple fleeces took from white-armed  
girls,

Up-kirtled to the knee, the crimson wine;  
There, as he gazed and thought, "Is this  
not like

Our Queen Elizabeth who waits and weaves,  
Penelope of England, her dark web  
Unendingly till England's Empire come;"  
There, as he gazed, for a moment, he could  
vow

The pictured arras moved. Well had it been  
Had he drawn sword and pierced it through  
and through;

But he suspected nothing and said nought  
To Walsingham; for thereupon they heard  
The sound of a low lute and a sweet voice  
Carolling like a gold-caged nightingale,  
Caught by the fowlers ere he found his  
mate,

And singing all his heart out evermore  
To the unknown forest-love he ne'er should  
see.

And Walsingham smiled sadly to himself,  
Knowing the weary queen had bidden some  
maid

Sing to her, even as David sang to Saul;  
Since all her heart was bitter with her love  
Or so it was breathed (and there the chess-  
board stood, " "

Her love's device upon it), though she still,  
For England's sake, must keep great foreign  
kings

Her suitors, wedding no man till she died.

Nor did she know how, in her happiest hour  
Remembered now most sorrowfully, the moon,  
Vicegerent of the sky, through summer dews,  
As that sweet ballad tells in plaintive rhyme,  
Silvering the grey, old Cumnor towers and all  
The hollow haunted oaks that grew thereby,  
Gleamed on a casement whence the pure  
white face

Of Amy Robsart, wife of Leicester, wife  
Unknown of the Queen's lover, a frail bar  
To that proud Earl's ambition, quietly gazed  
And heard the night-owl hoot a dark presage  
Of murder through her timid shuddering heart.  
But of that deed Elizabeth knew nought;  
Nay, white as Amy Robsart in her dream  
Of love she listened to the sobbing lute,  
Bitterly happy, proudly desolate;  
So heavy are all earth's crowns and sharp  
with thorns!  
But tenderly that high-born maiden sang.

## SONG.

*Now the purple night is past,  
Now the moon more faintly glows,  
Dawn has through thy casement cast  
Roses on thy breast, a rose,  
Now the kisses are all done,  
Now the world awakes anew,  
Now the charmed hour is gone,  
Let not love go, too.*

*When old winter, creeping night,  
Sprinkles raven hair with white,  
Dims the brightly glancing eye,  
Laughs away the dancing light,  
Roses may forget their sun,  
Lilies may forget their dew,  
Beauties perish, one by one,  
Let not love go, too.*

*Palaces and towers of pride  
Crumble year by year away ;  
Creeds like robes are laid aside,  
Even our very tombs decay !  
When the all-conquering moth and rust  
Gnaw the goodly garment through,  
When the dust returns to dust,  
Let not love go, too.*

*Kingdoms melt away like snow,  
Gods are spent like wasting flames,  
Hardly the new peoples know  
Their divine thrice-worshipped names !  
At the last great hour of all,  
When Thou makest all things new,  
Father, hear Thy children call,  
Let not love go, too.*

The song ceased: all was still; and now it seemed

## DRAKE.

Power brooded on the silence, and Drake  
saw

A woman come to meet him,—tall and pale  
And proud she seemed: behind her head two  
wings

As of some mighty phantom butterfly  
Glimmered with jewel-sparks in the gold  
gloom.

Her small, pure, grey-eyed face above her  
ruff

Was chiselled like an agate; and he knew  
It was the Queen. Low bent he o'er her  
hand;

And "Ah," she said, "Sir Francis Wal-  
singham

Hath told me what an English heart beats  
here!

Know you what injuries the King of Spain  
Hath done us?" Drake looked up at her:  
she smiled,

“We find you apt! Will you not be our knight?

For we are helpless”—witchingly she smiled—

“We are not ripe for war; our policy  
Must still be to uphold the velvet cloak  
Of peace; but I would have it mask the hand  
That holds the dagger! Will you not unfold  
Your scheme to us?” And then with a low  
bow

Walsingham, at a signal from the Queen,  
Withdrew; and she looked down at Drake  
and smiled;

And in his great simplicity the man  
Spake all his heart out like some youthful  
knight

Before his Gloriana: his heart burned,  
Knowing he talked with England, face to  
face;

And suddenly the Queen bent down to him,

England bent down to him, and his heart  
reeled

With the beauty of her presence—for indeed  
Women alone have royal power like this  
Within their very selves enthroned and  
shrinéd

To draw men's hearts out! Royal she bent  
down

And touched his hand for a moment.  
“Friend,” she said,

Looking into his face with subtle eyes,  
“I have searched thy soul to-night and  
know full well

How I can trust thee! Canst thou think  
that I,

The daughter of my royal father, lack  
The fire which every boor in England feels  
Burning within him as the bloody score  
Which Spain writes on the flesh of English-  
men

Mounts higher day by day? Am I not  
Tudor?

I am not deaf or blind; nor yet a king!  
I am a woman and a queen, and where  
Kings would have plunged into their red  
revenge

Or set their throne up on this temporal shore,  
As flatterers bade that wiser king Canúte,  
Thence to command the advancing tides of  
battle

Till one ensanguined sea whelm throne and  
king

And kingdom; friend, I take my woman's  
way,

Smile in mine enemies' faces with a heart  
All hell, and undermine them hour by hour!  
This island scarce can fend herself from  
France,

And now Spain holds the keys of all the  
world,

How should we fight her, save that my poor  
wit

Hath won the key to Philip? Oh, I know  
His treacherous lecherous heart, and hour  
by hour

My nets are drawing round him. I, that  
starve

My public armies, feed his private foes,  
Nourish his rebels in the Netherlands,  
Nay, sacrifice mine own poor woman's heart  
To keep him mine—there is no sacrifice  
On earth like this—and surely now stands  
Fate

With hand uplifted by the doors of Spain  
Ready to knock: the time is close at hand  
When I shall strike, once, and no second  
stroke.

Remember, friend, though kings have fought  
for her,

This England, with the trident in her grasp,

Was ever woman; and she waits her throne;  
And thou canst speed it. Furnish thee with  
ships:

Gather thy gentleman adventurers,  
And be assured thy parsimonious queen—  
" ay, she knows that chattering of the  
world—

With thee wealth enough. Then put  
to sea,

Fly the black flag of piracy awhile  
Against these blackest foes of all mankind.

No; what hast thou to do with piracy?

*Hec sis huma generis* indeed  
Is Spain: she dwells beyond the bounds of  
law;

Thine is no piracy, whate'er men say,  
Thou art a knight on Gloriana's quest.  
Oh, lay that golden unction to thy soul,  
This is no piracy, but glorious war,  
Waged for thy country and for all mankind

Therefore put out to sea without one fear,  
Ransack their El Dorados of the West,  
Pillage their golden galleons, sap their  
strength

Even at its utmost fountains; let them know  
That there is blood, not water, in our veins.  
Carry thy scheme out to the glorious end,  
And, though at first thou needs must ride  
alone

And unsupported, ere that end is reached,  
When I shall give the word, nay, but one  
word,

All England shall be up and after thee,  
The sword of England shall shine over thee,  
And round about thee like a guardian fire;  
All the great soul of England shall be there;  
Her mighty dead shall at that cry of doom  
Rise from their graves and in God's panoply  
Plunge with our standards through immortal  
storms

When Drake rides out across the wreck of  
Rome.

As yet we must be cautious; let no breath  
Escape thee, save to thy most trusted  
friends;

For now, if my lord Burleigh heard one  
word •

Of all thou hast in mind, he is so much  
The friend of caution and the beaten road,  
He would not rest till he had wrecked thy  
hopes

And sealed thy doom! Go now, fit out thy  
ships. •

Walsingham is empowered to give thee gold  
Immediately, but look to him for more  
As thou • shalt need it, gold and gold to  
spare, •

My golden-hearted pilot to the shores  
Of Empire—so farewell;” and through the  
gloom

She vanished as she came; and Drake  
groped, dazed,  
Out through the doors, and found great  
Walsingham  
Awaiting him with gold.

But in the room  
Where Drake had held his converse with  
the Queen  
The embroidered arras moved, and a lean  
face,  
White with its long eavesdropping upon  
death,  
Crept out and peered as a venomous adder  
peers  
From out dark ferns, then as the reptile  
flashes  
Along a path between two banks of flowers  
Almost too swift for sight, a stealthy form  
—One of the fifty spies whom Burleigh paid—  
Passed down the gold-gloomed corridor to seek

His master, whom among great books he  
found,

Calm, like a mountain brooding o'er the sea.

Nor did he break that calm for all these  
winds

Of rumour that now burst from out the sky.

His brow bent like a cliff over his thoughts,  
And the spy watched him half resentfully,

Thinking his news well worth a blacker  
frown.

At last the statesman smiled and answered,  
“Go;

Fetch Thomas Doughty, Leicester's secretary.”

Few suns had risen and set ere Francis  
Drake

Had furnished forth his ships with guns and  
men,

Tried seamen that he knew in storms of  
old,—

Will Harvest, who could haul the ropes and  
fight

All day, and sing a foc'sle song to cheer  
Sea-weary hearts at night; brave old Tom  
Moone

The carpenter, whose faithful soul looked up  
To Drake's large mastery with a mastiff's  
eyes;

And three-score trusty mariners, all scarred  
And weather-beaten. After these there came  
Some two-score gentleman adventurers,  
Gay college lads or lawyers that had grown  
Sick of the dusty Temple, and were fired  
With tales of the rich Indies and those tall  
Enchanted galleons drifting through the West,  
Laden with ingots and broad bars of gold.  
Already some had bought at a great price  
Green birds of Guatemala, which they wore  
On their slouched hats, tasting the high  
romance

And new-found colours of the world like wine.  
By night they gathered in a marvellous inn  
Beside the black and secret flowing Thames ;  
And joyously they tossed the magic phrase  
" Pieces of eight." from mouth to mouth,  
and laughed

And held the red wine up, night after night,  
Around their tables, toasting Francis Drake.  
Among these came a courtier, and none knew  
Or asked by whose approval, for each thought  
Some other brought him ; yet he made his way  
Cautiously, being a man with a smooth  
tongue,

The secretary of Leicester ; and his name  
Was Thomas Doughty. Most of all with  
Drake

He won his way to friendship, till at last  
There seemed one heart between them and  
one soul.

## BOOK II.

So on a misty grey December morn  
Five ships put out from calm old Plymouth  
Sound;  
Five little ships, the largest not so large  
As many a coasting yacht or fishing-trawl  
To-day; yet these must brave uncharted seas  
Of unimagined terrors, haunted glooms,  
And shadowy horrors of an unknown world  
Wild as primæval chaos. In the first,  
The *Golden Hynde*, a ship of eighteen guns,  
Drake sailed: John Wynter, a queen's cap-  
tain, next  
Brought out the *Elizabeth*, a stout new ship  
Of sixteen guns. The pinnace *Christopher*

Came next, in staunch command of old  
Tom Moone

Who, five years back, with reeking powder  
grimed,

Off Cartagena fought against the stars  
All night, and, as the sun arose in blood,  
Knee-deep 'in blood and brine, stood in the  
dark

Perilous hold and scuttled his own ship  
The *Swan*, bidding her down to God's great  
deep

Rather than yield her up a prize to Spain.

Lastly two gentleman-adventurers  
Brought out the new *Swan* and the *Marygold*.

Their crews, all told, were eight score men  
and boys.

Not only terrors of the deep they braved,  
Bodiless witchcrafts of the black abyss,  
Red gaping mouths of hell and gulfs of fire

That yawned for all who passed the tropic  
line;

But death lurked round them from their  
setting forth.

Mendoza, plenipotentiary of Spain,  
By spies informed, had swiftly warned his  
king,

Who sent out mandates through his huge  
empire

From Guadalchiber to the golden West  
For the instant sinking of all English ships  
And the instant execution of their crews  
Who durst appear in the Caribbean sea.

Moreover, in the pith of their emprise  
A peril lurked—Burleigh's emissaries,  
The smooth-tongued Thomas Doughty, who  
had brought

His brother—unacquitted of that charge  
Of poisoning, raised against him by the  
friends

Of Essex, but in luckless time released  
Lately for lack of proof, on no strong plea.  
These two wound through them like two  
snakes at ease  
In Eden, waiting for their venomous hour.  
Especially did Thomas Doughty toil  
With soft 'and flowery tongue to win his  
way;  
And Drake, whose rich imagination craved  
For something more than simple seamans'  
talk,  
Was marvellously drawn to this new friend  
Who with the scholar's mind, the courtier's  
gloss,  
The lawyer's wit, the adventurer's romance,  
Gold honey from the blooms of Euphues,  
Rare flashes from the *Mermaid* and sweet  
smiles  
Copied from Sidney's self, even to the  
glance

Of sudden, liquid sympathy, gave Drake  
That banquet of the soul he ne'er had  
known  
Nor needed till he knew, but needed now.  
So to the light of Doughty's answering eyes  
He poured his inmost thoughts out, hour by  
hour;  
And Doughty coiled up in the heart of  
Drake.

Against such odds the tiny fleet set sail;  
Yet gallantly and with heroic pride,  
Escutcheoned pavisades, emblazoned poops,  
Banners and painted shields and close-fights  
hung  
With scarlet broderies. Every polished gun  
Grinned through the jaws of some heraldic  
beast,  
Gilded and carven and gleaming with all  
hues;

While in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
Rich perfumes floated, given by the great  
Queen  
Herself to Drake as Captain-General;  
So that it seemed her soul was with the  
fleet,  
A presence to remind him, far away,  
Of how he talked with England, face to  
face,—  
No pirate he, but Gloriana's knight.  
Silver and gold his table furniture,  
Engraved and richly chased, lavishly gleamed  
While, fanfed by favouring airs, the ships  
advanced  
With streaming flags and ensigns and sweet  
chords  
Of music struck by skilled musicians  
Whom Drake brought with him, not from  
vanity,  
But knowing how the pulse of men beats high

To music; and the hearts of men like these  
Were open to the high romance of earth,  
And they that dwelt so near God's mystery  
Were proud of their own manhood. They  
went out

To danger as to a sweetheart far away,  
Who even now was drawing the western  
clouds

Like a cymar of silk and snow-white furs  
Close to her, till her body's beauty seemed  
Clad in a mist of kisses. They desired  
Her glittering petulance and her sulky sweet  
Red pouts of anger. They went out to her  
With pomp and ceremony, richly attired  
And girt about with honour as befit  
Souls that might talk with angels by the  
way.

Light as the sea-birds dipping their white  
wings

In foam before the gently heaving prows  
Each heart beat, while the low soft lapping  
splash

Of water racing past them ripped and tore  
Whiter and faster, and the bellying sails  
Filled out, and the white cliffs of England  
sank

Dwindling behind the broad grey plains of  
sea.

Meekly content and tamely stay-at-home  
The sea-birds seemed that piped across the  
waves;

And Drake, \*be-mused, leaned smiling to his  
friend

Doughty and said, " Is it not strange to know  
When we return yon speckled herring-gulls  
Will still be wheeling, dipping, flashing there  
Just as we leave them? Ah, my heart cries  
out

We shall not find a sweeter land afar

Than those thyme-scented hills we leave  
behind!

Soon the young lambs will bleat across the  
combes,

And breezes will bring puffs of hawthorn scent  
Down Devon lanes; over the purple moors  
Lavrocks will carol and the plover cry,  
The nesting peewit cry; on village greens  
Around the May-pole, while the moon hangs  
low,

The boys and girls of England merrily swing  
In country footing through the flowery dance;  
Roses return: I blame them not who stay,  
I blame them not at all who cling to home.  
For many of us indeed shall not return,  
Nor ever know that sweetness any more.  
But when our English clover once again  
Reddens round valleys thick with waving gold,  
Many beyond the faintest flush of dawn  
Shall sleep for ever in the cold green sea:

'Tis only we poor wandering prodigals  
That know the worth and wealth of heaven  
and home.

Bear with my weakness, for my heart is full  
Of yonder England, our sweet Ida mount,  
Mother of all our hopes and dreams and  
prayers;

Nor do I think a man needs be ashamed  
Whose eyes grow wet to leave his native  
land;

For there is nought a man should hold more  
dear

Than his own country and his father's home."  
Then the other with a laugh, "Nay, like the  
man

Who slept a hundred years we shall return  
And find our England strange: there are  
great storms

Brewing; God only knows what we shall  
find—

Perchance a Spanish king upon the throne!  
What then?" And Drake, "I should put  
down my helm,  
And out once more to the unknown golden  
West  
To die, as I have lived, an Englishman."  
So said he, while the white cliffs dwindled  
down,  
Faded, and vanished; but the prosperous  
wind  
Carried the five ships onward over the swell  
Of swinging, sweeping seas, till the sun sank,  
And height o'er height the chaos of the  
skies  
Broke out into the miracle of the stars.  
Frostily glittering, all the Milky Way  
Lay bare like diamond-dust upon the robe  
Of some great king. Orion and the Plough  
Glimmered through drifting gulfs of silver  
fleece,

And, far away, in Italy, that night  
Young Galileo, looking upward, heard  
The self-same whisper through that wild  
abyss  
Which now called Drake out to the un-  
known West.  
But, after supper, Drake came up on deck  
With Doughty, and on the cold poop as  
they leaned  
And gazed across the rolling gleam and  
gloom  
Of mighty muffled seas, began to give  
Voice to those lovely captives of the brain  
Which, like princesses in some forest-tower,  
Still yearn for the delivering prince, the  
sweet  
Far bugle-note that calls from answering  
minds.  
He told him how, in those dark days which  
now

Seemed like an evil dream, when the Princess  
Elizabeth even trembled for her life  
And read there, by the gleam of Smithfield  
fires,  
Those cunning lessons of diplomacy  
Which saved her then and now for Eng-  
land's sake,  
He passed his youth. 'Twas when the  
power of Rome  
Began to light the gloom with that great  
glare  
Of martyrdom which, while the stars endure,  
Bears witness how men overcame the world,  
Trod the red flames beneath their feet like  
flowers,  
Yea, cast aside the blackening robe of flesh,  
While with a crown of joy upon their  
heads,  
Even as into a palace, they passed through

The portals of the tomb to prove their love  
Stronger at least than death: and, in those  
days

A Puritan, with iron in his soul,  
Having in earlier manhood occupied  
His business in great waters and beheld  
The bloody cowls of the Inquisition pass  
Before the midnight moon as he kept watch;  
And having then forsworn the steely sea  
To dwell at home in England with his love  
At Tavistock in Devon, Edmund Drake  
Began, albeit too near the Abbey walls,  
To speak too staunchly for his ancient faith;  
And with his young child Francis, had to  
flee

By night at last for shelter to the coast.  
Little the boy remembered of that flight,  
Pillioned behind his father, save the clang  
And clatter of the hoofs on stony ground

Striking a sharp blue fire, while country  
tales

Of highwaymen kindled his reckless heart  
As the great steed went shouldering through  
the night.

There Francis, laying a little sunburnt  
hand

On the big holstered pistol at each side,  
Dreamed with his wide grey eyes that he  
himself

Was riding out on some freebooting quest,  
And felt himself heroic. League by league  
The magic world rolled past him as they  
rode,

Leaving him nothing but a memory  
Of his own making. Vaguely he perceived  
A thousand meadows darkly streaming by  
With clouds of perfume from their secret  
flowers,

A wayside cottage-window pointing out

A golden finger o'er the purple road;  
A puff of garden roses or a waft  
Of honeysuckle blown along a wood,  
While overhead that silver ship, the moon,  
Sailed slowly down the gulfs of glittering  
stars,  
Till, at the last, a buffet of fresh wind  
Fierce with sharp savours of the stinging  
brine  
Against his dreaming face brought up a roar  
Of mystic welcome from the Channel seas.  
And there Drake paused for a moment, as a  
song  
Stole o'er the waters from the *Marygold*  
Where some musician, striking luscious chords  
Of sweet-stringed music, freed his heart's  
desire  
In symbols of the moment, which the rest,  
And Doughty among them, scarce could un-  
derstand.

## SONG.

*The moon is up : the stars are bright :  
The wind is fresh and free !  
We're out to seek for gold to-night  
Across the silver sea !  
The world was growing grey and old :  
Break out the sails again !  
We're out to seek a Realm of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*We're sick of all the cringing knees,  
The courtly smiles and lies !  
God, let Thy singing Channel breeze  
Lighten our hearts and eyes !  
Let love no more be bought and sold  
For earthly loss or gain :  
We're out to seek an Age of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

*Beyond the light of far Cathay,  
Beyond all mortal dreams,  
Beyond the reach of night and day  
Our Eldorado gleams,  
Revealing—as the skies unfold—  
A star without a stain,  
The Glory of the Gates of Gold  
Beyond the Spanish Main.*

And, as the skilled musician made the words  
Of momentary meaning still imply  
His own eternal hope and heart's desire,  
Without belief, perchance, in Drake's own  
quest—  
To Drake's own greater mind the eternal  
glory  
Seemed to transfigure his immediate hope.  
But Doughty only heard a sweet concourse  
Of sounds. They ceased. And Drake re-  
sumed his tale

Of that strange flight in boyhood to the sea.

Next, the red-curtained inn and kindly hands  
Of Protestant Plymouth held his memory long;

Often in strange and distant dreams he saw  
That scene which now he tenderly pourtrayed  
To Doughty's half-ironic smiling lips,  
Half-sympathetic eyes; he saw again  
That small inn parlour with the homely fare  
Set forth upon the table, saw the gang  
Of seamen reeking from the spray come in,  
Like great new thoughts to some 'adventurous  
brain.

Feeding his wide grey eyes he saw them stand

Around the crimson fire and stamp their feet  
And scatter the salt drops from their big sea-  
boots;

And all that night he lay awake and heard

Mysterious thunderings of eternal tides  
Moaning out of a cold and houseless gloom  
Beyond the world, that made it seem most  
sweet  
To slumber in a little four-walled inn  
Immune from all that vastness. But at  
dawn  
He woke, he leapt from bed, he ran and  
lookt,  
There, through the tiny high bright case-  
ment, there,—  
Oh, fairy vision of that small boy's face  
Peeping at 'daybreak through the diamond  
pane!—  
There first he saw the wondrous new-born  
world,  
And round its princely shoulders wildly  
flowing,  
Gemmed with a myriad clusters of the sun,  
The magic azure mantle of the sea.

And, afterwards, there came those marvellous  
days

When, on that battleship, a disused hulk  
Rotting to death in Chatham Reach, they  
found

Sanctuary and a dwelling-place at last.

For Hawkins, that great ship-man, being  
their friend,

A Protestant, with power on Plymouth town,  
Nigh half whereof he owned, made Edmund  
Drake

Reader of prayer to all the ships of war  
That lay therein. So there the dreaming  
boy,

Francis, grew up in that grim nursery  
Among the ropes and masts and great dumb  
mouths

Of idle ordnance. In that hulk he heard  
Many a time his father and his friends  
Over some wild-eyed troop of refugees

Thunder against the powers of Spain and  
Rome,

“Idolaters who defiled the House of God  
In England;” and all round them, as he  
heard,

The clang and clatter of shipwright hammers  
rang,

And hour by hour upon his vision rose,  
In solid oak reality, new ships,  
As Ilion rose to music, ships of war,  
The visible shapes and symbols of his  
dream,

Unconscious yet, but growing as they grew,  
A wondrous incarnation, hour by hour,  
Till with their towering masts they stood  
complete,

Embodied thoughts, in God’s own dockyards  
built,

For Drake ere long to lead against the  
world.

There, as to round the tale with ringing  
gold,  
Across the waters from the full-plumed *Swan*  
The music of a *Mermaid* roundelay—  
*Our Lady of the Sea*, a Dorian theme  
Tuned to the soul of England—charmed the  
moon.

## SONG.

## I.

Queen Venus wandered away with a cry,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
For the purple wound in Adon's thigh;  
*Je vous en prie*, pity me;  
With a bitter farewell from 'sky to sky,  
And a moan, a moan from sea to sea;  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

## II.

The soft Ægean heard her sigh,—

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*

Heard the Spartan hills reply,

*Je vous en prie, pity me;*

Spain was aware of her drawing nigh

, Foot-gilt from the blossoms of Italy;

*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## III.'

In France they heard her voice go by,—

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?—*

And on the May-wind droop and die,

*Je vous en prie, pity me;*

Your maidens choose their loves, but I—

White as I came from the foam-white sea,

*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

## IV.

The warm red-meal-winged butterfly,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
Beat on her breast in the golden rye,—  
*Je vous en prie, pity me,*—  
Stained her breast with a dusty dye  
Red as the print of a kiss might be!  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

## V.

Is there no land, afar or nigh,—  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*—  
But dreads the kiss o' the sea? Ah, why—  
*Je vous en prie, pity me!*—  
Why will ye cling to the loves that die?  
Is earth all Adon to my plea?  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

## VI.

Under the warm blue summer sky,—

*N'esperez vous, mon bel ami?*—

With outstretched arms and a low long  
sigh,—

*Je vous en prie, pity me;*—

Over the Channel they saw her fly

To the white-cliffed island that crowns  
the sea,

*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*

*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami?*

## VII.

England laughed as her queen drew nigh,—

*N'osez vous, mon bel ami?*—

To the white-walled cottages gleaming high,  
*je vous en prie, pity me!*

They drew her in with a joyful cry  
To the hearth where she sits with a  
babe on her knee,  
She has turned her moan to a lullaby,  
She is nursing a son to the kings of  
the sea,  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel, mon bel,*  
*N'oserez vous, mon bel ami ?*

Such memories, on the plunging *Golden Hynde*,  
Under the stars, Drake drew before his  
friend  
Doughty; but touched most briefly on his  
great  
Voyage to Darien, and the famous Tree,  
And those wild exploits down to Rio Grande  
Which even now had made his fierce renown  
Terrible to all lonely ships of Spain.  
E'en now, indeed, that poet of Portugal,

Lope de Vega, filled with this new fear  
Began to meditate his epic muse  
Till, like a cry of panic from his lips,  
He shrilled the faint *Dragontea* forth, wherein  
Drake is that Dragon of the Apocalypse,  
The dread Antagonist of God and Man.

Well had it been for Doughty on that night  
Had he not heard what followed; for, indeed,  
When two minds clash, not often does the  
less  
Conquer the greater; but, without one  
thought  
Of evil, seeing they now were safe at sea,  
Drake told him, only somewhat, yet too  
much,  
Of that close conference with the Queen.  
And lo,  
The face of Doughty blanched with a slow  
thought

That crept like a cold worm through all his  
brain,

“Thus much I knew, though secretly,  
before;

But here he freely tells me as his friend;  
If I am false and he is what they say,  
His knowledge of my knowledge will mean  
death.”

But Drake looked round at Doughty with a  
smile

And said, “Forgive me now: thou art not  
used

To these cold nights at sea! thou tremblest,  
friend;

Let us go down and drink a cup of sack  
To our return!” And at that kindly smile  
Doughty shook off his nightmare mood, and  
thought,

“I am no sea-dog, but a man of birth!  
The yard-arm is for dogs, not gentlemen!

Even Drake would not misuse a man of birth!"

And in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
Revolving subtle treacheries he sat.

There with the sugared phrases of the court  
And general sentiments which Drake believed  
Were revelations of the man's own mind,  
Bartering beads for gold, he drew out all  
The simple Devon seaman's inmost heart,  
And coiled up in the soul of Francis Drake.  
There in the solemn night they interchanged  
Lies for sweet confidences. From one wall  
The picture of Drake's love looked down on  
him;

And, like a bashful schoolboy's, that bronzed  
face

Flushed as he blurted out with brightening  
eyes

And quickening breath how he had seen her  
first,

Crowned on the village green, a Queen of May.

Her name, too, was Elizabeth, he said,  
As if it proved that she, too, was a queen,  
Though crowned with milk-white Devon may  
alone,

And queen but of one plot of meadow-sweet.  
As yet, he said, he had only kissed her hand,

Smiled in her eyes and—there Drake also blanched,

Thinking, "I ne'er may see her face again,"  
And Doughty comforted his own dark heart  
Thinking, "I need not fear so soft a soul  
As this"; and yet, he wondered how the man,

Seeing his love so gripped him, none the less

Could leave her, thus to follow after dreams;  
For faith to Doughty was an unknown word,

And trustfulness the property of fools.  
At length they parted, each to his own  
couch,  
Doughty with half a chuckle, Francis Drake  
With one old-fashioned richly grateful prayer  
Blessing all those he loved, as he had learnt  
Beside his mother's knee in Devon days.

•

So all night long they sailed; but when a  
rift  
Of orchard crimson broke the yellowing  
gloom  
And barred the closely clouded East with  
dawn,  
Behold, a giant galleon overhead,  
Lifting its huge black shining sides on high,  
Loomed like some misty monster of the deep:  
And, sullenly rolling out great gorgeous folds  
Over her rumbled like a thunder-cloud  
The heavy flag of Spain. The splendid poop,

Mistily lustrous as a dragon's hoard  
Seen in some magic cave-mouth o'er the sea  
Through shimmering April sunlight after  
rain,  
Blazed to the morning; and her port-holes  
grinned  
With row on row of cannon. There at once  
One sharp shrill whistle sounded, and those  
five  
Small ships, mere minnows clinging to the  
flanks  
Of that Leviathan, unseen, unheard,  
Undreamt of, grappled her. She seemed  
asleep,  
Swinging at ease with great half-slackened  
sails,  
Majestically careless of the dawn.  
There in the very native seas of Spain,  
There with the yeast and foam of her proud  
cliffs,

Her own blue coasts, in sight across the waves,

Up her Titanic sides without a sound  
The naked-footed British seamen swarmed  
With knives between their teeth: then on  
her decks

They dropped like panthers, and the softly  
fierce

Black-bearded watch of Spaniards, all amazed,  
Rubbing their eyes as if at a wild dream,  
Upraised a sudden shout, *El Draque! El  
Draque!*

And flashed their weapons out, but all too  
late;

For, ere their sleeping comrades reached the  
deck,

The little watch, out-numbered and out-  
matched,

• Lay bound, and o'er the hatches everywhere  
The points of naked cutlasses on guard

Gleamed, and without a struggle those below  
Gave up their arms, their poignards jewelled  
thick

With rubies, and their blades of Spanish  
steel.

Then onward o'er the great grey gleaming sea  
They swept with their rich booty, night and  
day.

Five other prizes, one for every ship,  
Out of the seas of Spain they suddenly  
caught  
And carried with them, laughing as they  
went—

“ Now, now indeed the Rubicon is crossed;  
Now have we singed the eyelids and the  
beard  
Of Spain; now have we roused the hornet's  
nest;  
Now shall we sail against a world in arms;

Now we have nought between us and black  
death

But our own hands, five ships, and three  
score guns."

So laughed they, plunging through the bay  
of storms,

Biscay, and past Gibraltar, not yet clothed  
With British thunder, though, as one might  
dream,

Gazing in dim prophetic grandeur out  
Across the waves while that small fleet went  
by,

Or watching them with love's most wistful  
fear

As they plunged Southward to the lonely  
coasts

Of Africa, till right in front up-soared,  
Tremendous over ocean, Teneriffe,  
Cloud-robed, but crowned with colours of  
the dawn.

Already those two traitors were at work,  
Doughty and his false brother, among the  
crews,  
Who knew not yet the vastness of their quest,  
Nor dreamed of aught 'beyond the accus-  
tomed world;  
For Drake had kept it secret, and the  
thoughts  
Of some that he had shipped before the  
mast  
Set sail scarce farther than for Mogadore  
In West Morocco, or at the utmost mark  
For northern Egypt, by the midnight woods  
And crystal palace roofed with chrysoprase  
Where Prester John had reigned five hundred  
years,  
And Sydon, river of jewels, through the dark  
Enchanted gorges rolled its rays along!  
Some thought of Rio Grande; but scarce to  
ten

The true intent was known ; while to divert  
The rest from care the skilled musicians  
    played.

But those two Doughtys cunningly devised  
By chance - dropt 'words to breathe a hint  
    abroad ;

And through the foc'sles crept a grisly fear  
Of things that lay beyond the bourne of  
    earth,

Till even those hardy seamen almost quailed ;  
And now, at any moment, they might turn  
With terror in their eyes. They might  
    refuse

To sail into that fabled burning Void  
Or brave that *primum mobile* which drew  
O'er-daring ships into the jaws of hell  
Beyond the Pole Antarticke, where the sea  
Rushed down through fiery mountains, and  
    no sail

Could e'er return against its roaring stream.

Now down the coast of Barbary they cruised  
Till Christmas Eve embraced them in the  
heart  
Of summer. In a bay of mellow calm  
They moored, and as the fragrant twilight  
brought  
The stars, the sound of song and dance  
arose;  
And down the shores in stealthy silence  
crept,  
Out of the massy forest's emerald gloom,  
The naked, dark-limbed children of the  
night,  
Unseen, to gaze upon the floating glare  
Of revelry; unheard, to hear that strange  
New music of the gods, where o'er the  
soft  
Ripple and wash of the lanthorn-crimsoned  
tide  
Will Harvest's voice above the chorus rang.

## SONG.

*In Devonshire, now, the Christmas chime  
Is carolling over the lea ;  
And the sexton shovels away the snow  
From the old church porch, maybe ;  
And the waits with their lanthorns and noses  
    a-glow  
Come round for their Christmas fee ;  
But, as in old England it's Christmas-time,  
Why, so is it here at sea,  
    My lads,  
Why, so is it here at sea !*

*When the ship comes home, from turret to poop  
Filled full with Spanish gold,  
There'll be many a country dance and joke,  
    And many a tale to be told ;  
Every old woman shall have a red cloak  
    To fend her against the cold ;*

*And every old man shall have a big round stoup  
Of jolly good ale and old,  
My lads,  
Jolly good ale and old !*

But on the morrow came a prosperous wind  
Whereof they took advantage, and shook out  
The flashing sails, and held their Christmas feast  
Upon the swirling ridges of the sea :  
And, sweeping Southward with full many a  
rouse  
And shout of laughter, at the fall of day,  
While the black prows drove, leapt, and  
plunged, and ploughed  
Through the broad dazzle of sunset-coloured  
tides,  
Outside the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*,  
Where Drake and his chief captains dined  
in state,  
The skilled musicians made a great new song.

## SONG.

## I.

*Happy by the hearth sit the lasses and the lads, now,  
Roasting of their chestnuts, toasting of their  
toes !*

*When the door is opened to a blithe new-comer,  
Stamping like a ploughman to shuffle off the  
snows ;*

*Rosy flower-like faces through the soft red fire-  
light*

*Float as if to greet us, far away at sea,  
Sigh as they remember, and turn the sigh to  
laughter,*

*Kiss beneath the mistletoe and wonder at their  
glee.*

*With their “heigh ho, the holly !*

*This life is most jolly !”*

*Christmas-time is kissing-time ;*

*Away with melancholy !*

## II.

*Ah, the Yule of England, the happy Yule of  
England,*

*Yule of berried holly and the merry mistletoe;  
The boar's head, the brown ale, the blue snapdragon,  
Yule of groaning tables and the crimson log  
aglow!*

*Yule, the golden bugle to the scattered old com-  
panions,*

*Ringing as with laughter, shining as through  
tears!*

*Loved of little children, oh guard the holy Yule-  
tide,*

*Guard it, men of England, for the child be-  
yond the years.*

*With its "heigh ho, the holly!"*

*Away with melancholy!*

*Christmas-time is kissing-time,*

*"This life is most jolly!"*

Now to the Fortunate Islands of old time  
They came, and found no glory as of old  
Encircling them, no red ineffable calm  
Of sunset round crowned faces pale with bliss  
Like evening stars; but rugged, waste, and  
wild

Those isles were when they neared them,  
though afar

They beautifully smouldered in the sun  
Like dusky purple jewels fringed and frayed  
With silver foam across that ancient sea  
Of wonder. On the largest of the seven  
Drake landed Doughty with his musketeers  
To exercise their weapons and to seek  
Supplies among the matted uncouth huts  
Which, as the ships drew round each ragged  
cliff,

Crept like remembered misery into sight;  
Oh, like the strange dull waking from a  
dream

They blotted out the rosy courts and fair  
Imagined marble thresholds of the King  
Achilles and the heroes that were gone.  
But Drake cared nought for these things.  
    Such a heart

He had, to make each utmost ancient bourne  
Of man's imagination but a point  
Of new departure for his Golden Dream.  
But Doughty with his men ashore, alone,  
Among the sparse wind-bitten groves of  
palm,  
Kindled their fears of all they must endure  
On that immense adventure. Nay, sometimes  
He hinted of a voyage far beyond  
All history and fable, far beyond  
Even that Void whence only two returned,—  
Columbus, with his men in mutiny;  
Magellan, who could only hound his crew  
Onward by threats of death, until they  
turned

In horror from the Threat that lay before,  
Preferring to be hanged as mutineers  
Rather than venture farther. Nor indeed  
Did even Magellan at the last return;  
But, with all hell around him, in the clutch  
Of devils died upon some savage isle  
By poisonous black enchantment. Not in  
vain  
Were Doughty's words on that volcanic  
shore  
Among the stunted dark acacia trees,  
Whose heads, all bent one way by the  
trade-wind,  
Pointed North-east by North, South-west by  
West,  
Ambiguous sibyls that with wizened arms  
Mysteriously declared a twofold path,  
Homeward or onward. But aboard the ships,  
Among the hardier seamen, old Tom Moone,  
With one or two stout comrades, overbore

All doubts and questionings with blither tales  
Of how they sailed to Darien and heard  
Nightingales in November all night long  
As down a coast like Paradise they cruised  
Through seas of lasting summer, Eden isles,  
Where birds like rainbows, butterflies like  
    gems,  
And flowers like coloured fires o'er 'fairy  
    creeks  
Floated and flashed beneath the shadowy  
    palms;  
While ever and anon a bark canoe  
With naked Indian maidens flower-festooned  
Put out from shadowy coves, laden with fruit  
Ambrosial o'er the silken shimmering sea.  
And once a troop of nut-brown maidens  
    came—  
So said Tom Moone, a twinkle in his eye—  
Swimming to meet them through the warm  
    blue waves

And wantoned through the water, like those  
nymphs

Which one green April at the Mermaid Inn  
He heard Kit Marlowe mightily pourtray,  
Among his boon co<sup>m</sup>panions, in a song  
Of Love that swam the sparkling Hellespont  
Upheld by nymphs, not lovelier than these,—  
Though whiter yet not lovelier than these;  
For those like flowers, but these like rounded  
fruit

Rosily ripening through the clear tides tossed  
From nut-brown breast and arm all round  
the ship

The thousand-coloured spray. Shapely of  
limb

They were; but as they laid their small  
brown hands

Upon the ropes we cast them, Captain Drake  
Suddenly thundered at them and bade them  
pack

For a troop of naughty wenches! At that  
tale

A tempest of fierce laughter rolled around  
The foc'sle; but one boy from London town,  
A pale-faced prentice, runh-away to sea,  
Asking why Drake had bidden them pack so  
soon,

Tom Moone turned to him with his deep-sea  
growl,

“ Because our Captain is no pink-eyed boy  
Nor soft-limbed Spaniard, but a staunch-  
souled Man,

Full-blooded; nerved like iron; with a girl  
He loves at home in Devon; and a mind  
For ever bent upon some mighty goal,  
I know not what—but 'tis enough for me  
To know my Captain knows.” And then he  
told

How sometimes o'er the gorgeous forest  
gloom

Some marble city, rich, mysterious, white,  
An ancient treasure-house of Aztec kings,  
Or palace of forgotten Incas gleamed;  
And in their dim rich lofty cellars gold,  
Beyond all wildest dreams, great bars of  
gold,

Like pillars, tossed in mighty chaos, gold  
And precious stones, agate and emerald,  
Diamond, sapphire, ruby, and sardonyx.

So said he, as they waited the return  
Of Doughty, resting in the foc'sle gloom,  
Or idly couched about the sun-swept decks  
On sails or coils of rope, while overhead  
Some boy would climb the rigging and look  
out,

Arching his hand to see if Doughty came.  
But when he came, he came with a strange  
face  
Of feigned despair; and with a stammering  
tongue

He vowed he could not find those poor supplies

Which Drake himself in other days had found

Upon that self-same island. But, perchance, This was a barren year, he said. And Drake Looked at him, suddenly, and at the musketeers.

Their eyes were strained; their faces wore a cloud.

That night he said no more; but on the morn,

Mistrusting nothing, Drake with subtle sense Of weather-wisdom, through that little fleet Distributed his crews anew. And all The prisoners and the prizes at those isles They left behind them, taking what they would

From out their carven cabins,—glimmering silks,

Chiselled Toledo blades, and broad doubloons.  
And lo, as they weighed anchor, far away  
Behind them on the blue horizon line  
It seemed a city of towering masts arose;  
And from the crow's nest of the *Golden  
Hynde*.

A seaman cried, "By God; the hunt is  
up!"

And like a tide of triumph through their  
veins

The red rejoicing blood began to race  
As there they saw the avenging ships of  
Spain,

Eight mighty galleons, nosing out their trail.  
And Drake growled, "Oh, my lads of Bide-  
ford,

It cuts my heart to show the hounds our  
heels;

But we must not emperil our great quest!  
Such fights as that must wait—as our reward

When we return. Yet I will not put on  
One stitch of sail. So, lest they are not too  
slow  
To catch us, clear the decks. God, I would  
like  
To fight them!" So the little fleet advanced  
With decks all cleared and shotted guns and  
men  
Bare-armed beside them, hungering to be  
caught,  
And quite distracted from their former  
doubts;  
For danger, in that kind, they never feared.  
But soon the heavy Spaniards dropped be-  
hind;  
And not in vain had Thomas Doughty sown  
The seeds of doubt; for many a brow grew  
black  
With sullen-seeming care that erst was gay.  
But happily and in good time there came,

Not from behind them now, but right in front,

On the first sun-down of their quest renewed,  
Just as the sea grew dark around their ships,  
A chance that loosed heart-gnawing doubt  
in deeds.

For through a mighty zone of golden haze  
Blotting the purple of the gathering night  
A galleon like a floating mountain moved  
To meet them, clad with sunset and with dreams.

Her masts and spars immense in jewelled mist  
Shimmered: her rigging, like an emerald web  
Of golden spiders, tangled half the stars!  
Embodied sunset, dragging the soft sky  
O'er dazzled ocean, through the night she drew

Out of the unknown lands; and round a prow

That jutted like a moving promontory

Over a cloven wilderness of foam,  
Upon a lofty blazoned scroll her name  
*San Salvador* challenged obsequious isles  
Where'er she rode; who kneeling like dark  
slaves  
Before some great Sultân must lavish forth  
From golden cornucopias, East and West,  
Red streams of rubies, cataracts of peafl.  
But, at a signal from their admiral, all  
Those five small ships lay silent in the  
gloom  
Which, just as if some god were on their side,  
Covered them in the dark troughs of the  
waves,  
Letting her pass to leeward. On she came,  
Blazing with lights, a City of the Sea,  
Belted with crowding towers and clouds of  
sail,  
And round her bows a long-drawn thunder  
rolled

Splendid with foam; but ere she passed  
them by

Drake gave the word, and with one crimson  
flash

Two hundred yards of black and hidden sea  
Leaped into sight between them as the roar  
Of twenty British cannon shattered the night.

Then after her they drove, like black sea-  
wolves

Behind some royal high-branched stag of ten,  
Hanging upon those bleeding foam-flecked  
flanks,

Leaping, snarling, worrying, as they went  
In full flight down the wind; for those light  
ships

Much speedier than their huge antagonist,  
Keeping to windward, worked their will with  
her.

In vain she burnt wild lights and strove to  
scan

The darkening deep. Her musketeers in vain  
Provoked the crackling night with random  
fires:

In vain her broadside bellowings burst at  
large

As if the Gates of Erebus unrolled.

For ever and anon the deep-sea gloom  
From some new quarter, like a dragon's  
mouth

Opened and belched forth crimson flames  
and tore

Her sides as if with iron claws unseen;  
Till, all at once, rough voices close at hand  
Out of the darkness thundered, "Grapple  
her!"

And, falling on their knees, the Spaniards  
knew

The Dragon of that red Apocalypse.

There with one awful cry, *El Draque! El  
Draque!*

They cast their weapons from them; for the  
moon

Rose, eastward, and against her rising black  
Over the bloody bulwarks Francis Drake,  
Grasping the great hilt of his naked sword,  
Towered for a moment to their startled eyes  
Through all the zenith like the King of Hell.  
Then he leaped down upon their shining  
decks,

And after him swarmed and towered and  
leapt in haste

A brawny band of three score Englishmen,  
Gigantic as they loomed against the sky  
And risen, it seemed, by miracle from the sea.  
So small were those five ships below the walls  
Of that huge floating mountain. Royally  
Drake, from the swart commander's trem-  
bling hands

Took the surrendered sword, and bade his  
men

Gather the fallen weapons on an heap,  
And placed a guard about them, while the  
    moon  
Silvering the rolling seas for many a mile  
Glanced on the huddled Spaniards' rich  
    attire,  
As like one picture of despair they grouped  
Under the splintered main-mast's creaking  
    shrouds,  
And the great swinging shadows of the sails  
Mysteriously swept the gleaming decks;  
Where many a butt of useless cannon  
    gloomed  
Along the accoutred bulwarks or upturned,  
As the ship wallowed in the heaving deep,  
Dumb mouths of empty menace to the stars.

Then Drake appointed Doughty, with a  
    guard,  
To sail the prize on to the next dim isle

Where they might leave her, taking aught  
they would

From out her carven cabins and rich holds.  
And Doughty's heart leaped in him as he  
thought, .

"I have my chance at last"; but Drake,  
who still

Trusted the man, made surety doubly sure,  
And in his wary weather-wisdom sent  
—Even as a breathing type of friendship,  
sent—

His brother, Thomas Drake, aboard the  
prize;

But set his brother, his own flesh and blood,  
Beneath the man, as if to say, "I give  
My loyal friend dominion over me."

So courteously he dealt with him; but he,  
Seeing his chance once more slipping away,  
Raged inwardly and, from his own false  
heart

Imputing his own evil, he contrived  
A cunning charge that night; and when  
they came

Next day, at noon, upon the destined isle,  
He suddenly spat the secret venom forth,  
With such fierce wrath in his defeated soul  
That he himself almost believed the charge.  
For when Drake stepped on the *San*  
*Salvador*

To order all things duly about the prize,  
What booty they must keep and what let go,  
Doughty received him with a blustering voice  
Of red mock-righteous wrath, “Is this the way  
Englishmen play the pirate, Francis Drake?  
While thou wast dreaming of thy hero's  
crown—

God save the mark!—thy brother, nay, thy  
spy,  
Must play the common pilferer, must convert  
The cargo to his uses, rob us all

Of what we risked our necks to win: he  
wears

The ransom of an emperor round his throat  
That might enrich us all. Who saw him  
wear

That chain of rubies ere last night?"

And Drake,  
"Answer him, brother;" and his brother  
smiled

And answered, "Nay, I never wore this chain  
Before last night; but Doughty knows, in-  
deed,

For he was with me—and none else was  
there

But Doughty—'tis my word against his  
word,

That close on midnight we were summoned  
down

To an English seaman who lay dying below  
Unknown to any of us, a prisoner

In chains, that had been captured none knew  
where,

For all his mind was far from Darien,  
And wandering evermore through Devon lanes  
At home; whom we released; and from his  
waist

He took this hidden chain and gave it me,  
Begging me that if ever I returned  
To Bideford in Devon I would go  
With whatsoever wealth it might produce  
To his old mother who, with wrinkled hands  
In some small white-washed cottage o'er the  
sea,

Where wall-flowers bloom in April, even now  
Is turning pages of the well-worn Book  
And praying for her son's return, nor knows  
That he lies cold upon the heaving main.  
But this he asked; and this in all good faith  
I swore to do; and even now he died,  
And hurrying hither from his side I clasped

His chain of rubies round my neck awhile,  
In full sight of the sun. I have no more  
To say." Then up spoke Hatton's trumpeter :  
" But I have more to say. Last night I saw  
Doughty, but not in full sight of the sun,  
Nor once, nor twice, but three times at the  
least,

Carrying chains of gold, clusters of gems,  
And whatsoever wealth he could convey  
Into his cabin and smuggle in smallest space "  
" Nay," Doughty stammered, mixing sneer  
and lie,

Yet bolstering up his courage with the thought  
That being what courtiers called a gentleman  
He ranked above the rude sea-discipline,  
" Nay, they were free gifts from the Spanish  
crew

Because I treated them with courtesy."

Then bluff Will Harvest, " That perchance  
were true,

For he hath been close closeted for hours  
With their chief officers, drinking their health  
In our own war-bought wine, while down  
below

Their captured English seaman groaned his  
last."

Then Drake, whose utter silence, with a sense  
Of infinite power and justice, ruled 'their  
hearts,

Suddenly thundered—and the traitor blanched  
And quailed before him. "This my flesh  
and blood

I placed beneath thee as my dearer self!  
But thou, in trampling on him, shalt not say  
I charge thy brother. Nay, thou chargest  
me!

Against me only hast thou stirred this strife;  
And now, by God, shalt thou learn, once  
for all,

That I, thy captain for this voyage, hold

The supreme power of judgment in my hands.

Get thee aboard my flagship! When I come I shall have more to say to thee; but thou, My brother, take this galleon in thy charge; For, as I see, she holdeth all the stores Which Doughty failed to find. She shall return

With us to that New World from which she came.

But now let these our prisoners all embark In yonder pinnace; let them all go free. I care not to be cumbered on my way Through dead Magellan's unattempted dream With chains and prisoners. In that Golden World

Which means much more to me than I can speak,

Much more, much more than I can speak or breathe,

Being, behind whatever name it bears—  
Earthly Paradise, Island of the Saints,  
Cathay, or Zipangu, or Hy Brasil—  
The eternal symbol of my soul's desire,  
A sacred country shining 'on the sea,  
That Vision without which, the wise king  
said,

A people perishes; in that place of hope,  
That Tirn'an Og, that land of lasting youth,  
Where whosoever sails with me shall drink  
Fountains of immortality and dwell  
Beyond the fear of death for evermore,  
There shall we see the dust of battle dance  
Everywhere in the sunbeam of God's peace!  
Oh, in the new Atlantis of my soul  
There are no captives: there the wind blows  
free;

And, as in sleep, I have heard the marching  
song

Of mighty peoples rising in the West,

Wonderful cities that shall set their foot  
Upon the throat of all old tyrannies;  
And on the West wind I have heard a cry,  
The shoreless cry of the prophetic sea  
Heralding through that golden wilderness  
The Soul whose path our task is to make  
straight,  
Freedom, the last great Saviour of mankind.  
I know not what I know: these are wild  
words,  
Which as the sun draws out earth's morning  
mists  
Over dim fields where careless cattle sleep,  
Some visionary Light, unknown, afar,  
Draws from my darkling soul. Why should  
we drag  
Thither this Old-World weight of utter  
gloom,  
Or with the ballast of these heavy hearts  
Make sail in sorrow for Pacific Seas?

Let us leave chains and prisoners to Spain;  
But set these free to make their own way  
home!"

So said he, groping blindly towards the truth,  
And heavy with the treason of his friend.  
His face was like a king's face as he spake,  
For sorrows that strike deep reveal the deep;  
And through the gateways of a ragg'd wound  
Sometimes a god will drive his chariot wheels  
From some deep heaven within the hearts  
of men.

Nevertheless, the immediate seamen there  
Knowing how great a ransom they might ask  
For some among their prisoners, men of  
wealth  
And high degree, scarce liked to free them  
thus;

And only saw in Drake's conflicting moods  
The moment's whim. "For little will he  
care,"

They muttered, "when we reach those fabled  
shores,

Whether his cannon break their golden  
peace."

Yet to his face they murmured not at all;  
Because his eyes compelled them like a law.  
So there they freed the prisoners and set sail  
Across the earth-shaking shoulders of the  
broad

Atlantic, and the great grey slumbrous waves  
Triumphantly swelled up to meet the keels.

## BOOK III.

Now in the cabin of the *Golden Hynde*  
At dusk, Drake sent for Doughty. From  
one wall  
The picture of his love looked down on him ;  
And on the table lay the magic chart,  
Drawn on a buffalo horn, all small peaked  
isles,  
Dwarf promontories, tiny twisted creeks,  
And fairy harbours under elfin hills,  
With marvellous inscriptions lined in red,—  
*As Here is Gold, or Many Rubies Here,*  
*Or Ware Witch-crafte, or Here is Cannibals.*  
For in his great simplicity the man  
Delighted in it, with the adventurous heart

Of boyhood poring o'er some well-thumbed  
tale

On blue Twelfth Night beside the crimson  
fire;

And o'er him, like the vision of a boy  
In his first knighthood when, upon some  
hill

Washed by the silver fringes of the sea,  
Amidst the purple heather he lies and reads  
Of Arthur and Avilion, like a star

His love's pure face looked down. There  
Doughty came,

Half fearful, half defiant, with a crowd  
Of jostling half-excuses on his lips,  
And one dark swarm of adders in his heart.

For now what light of chivalry remained  
In Doughty's mind was thickening with a  
plot,

Subtler and deadlier than the serpent's first  
Attempt on our first sire in Eden bower.

Drake, with a countenance open as the sun,  
Received him, saying: "Forgive me, friend,  
for I

Was hasty with thee. I wellnigh forgot  
Those large and liberal nights we two have  
passed

In this old cabin, telling all our dreams  
And hopes, in friendship, o'er and o'er again.  
But Vicary, thy lawyer friend, hath been  
Pleading with me; and now I understand  
All; so forgive,—for thou art hasty too,  
And hast said things in passion which, 'fore  
God,

I would not take from other men alive.  
But now—I understand. Thou shalt no more  
Be vexed with a divided mastership.  
Indeed, I trust thee, Doughty; against all  
Appearances I trust thee. Wilt thou not  
Be friends with me? For now in ample  
proof

Thou shalt take charge of this my *Golden Hynde*

In all things, save of seamanship, which rests  
With the ship's master under my command.  
But I myself will sail upon the prize."  
And with the word he gathered up the chart,  
Took down his lady's picture with a smile,  
Gripped Doughty's hand and left him, star-  
ing, sheer

Bewildered with that magnanimity  
Of faith, throughout all shadows, in some  
light

Unseen behind the shadows. Thus did Drake  
Give up his own fair cabin which he loved;  
Being, it seemed, a little travelling home,  
Fragrant with memories,—gave it, as he  
thought,

In recompense to one whom he had wronged.  
For even as his mind must ever yearn  
To shores beyond the sunset, even so

He yearned through all dark shadows to his friend,

And with his greater nature striving still  
To comprehend the lesser, as the sky  
Embraces our low earth, he would adduce  
Justifications, thus: "These men of law  
Are trained to plead for any and every cause,  
To feign an indignation, or to prove . . .  
The worse is better and that black is white!  
Small wonder that their passion goes astray:  
Ah God, there is one prayer for all of us—  
*Enter not into judgment with Thy servant!*"

Yet as his boat pulled tow'rd the Spanish prize

Leaving the *Golden Hynde*, far off he heard  
A voice that chilled him, "as the voice of  
Fate

Crying like some old Bellman through the world.

## SONG.

*Yes ; oh, yes ; if any seek  
Laughter flown or lost delight,  
Glancing eye or rosy cheek,  
Love shall claim his own to-night !  
Say, hath any lost a friend ?  
Yes ; oh, yes !  
Let his distress  
In my ditty find its end.*

*Yes ; oh, yes ; here all is found !  
Kingly palaces await  
Each its rightful owner, crowned  
King and consecrate,  
Under the wet and wintry ground !  
Yes ; oh, yes !  
There sure redress  
Lies where all is lost and found.*

And Doughty, though Drake's deed of kindness flashed  
A moment's kind contrition through his heart,  
Immediately, with all his 'lawyer's wit  
True to the cause that hired him, laughed it by,  
And straight began to weave the treacherous web  
Of soft intrigue wherein he meant to snare  
The passions of his comrades. Night and day,  
As that small fleet drove onward o'er the deep,  
Cleaving the sunset with their bright black prows  
Or hunted by the red pursuing Dawn,  
He stirred between the high-born gentlemen  
(Whose white and jewelled hands, gallant in fight,

And hearts remembering Cręy and Poictiers,  
Were of scant use in common seamanship),  
Between these and the men whose rough  
tarred arms

Were good at equal need in storm or war  
Yet took a poorer portion of the prize,  
He stirred a subtle jealousy and fanned  
A fire that swiftly grew almost to hate.  
For when the seamen must take precedence  
Of loiterers on the deck — through half a  
word,

Small, with intense device, like some fierce  
lens,  
He magnified their rude and blustering mode ;  
Or urged some scented fop, whose idle brain  
Bused itself with momentary whims,  
To bid the master alter here a sail,  
Or there a rope ; and, if the man refused,  
Doughty, at night, across the wine-cups, raved  
Against the rising insolence of the mob ;

And hinted Drake himself was half to blame,  
In words that seemed to say, "I am his  
friend,

Or I should bid you think him all to blame."  
So fierce indeed the strife became that once,  
While Chester, Doughty's catspaw, played  
with fire,

The grim ship-master growled between his  
teeth,

"Remember, sir, remember, ere too late,  
Magellan's mutinous vice-admiral's end."

And Doughty heard, and with a boisterous  
laugh

Slapped the old sea-dog on the back and said,  
"The gallows are for dogs, not gentlemen!"  
Meanwhile his brother, sly John Doughty,  
sought

To fan the seamen's fear of the unknown  
world

With whispers and conjectures; and, at night,

He brought old books of Greek and Hebrew  
down

Into the foc'sle, claiming by their aid  
A knowledge of Black Art, and power to tell  
The future, which he dreadfully displayed  
There in the flickering light of the oily lamp,  
Bending above their huge and swarthy palms  
And tracing them to many a grisly doom.

So many a night and day westward they  
plunged.

The half-moon ripened to its mellow round,  
Dwindled again and ripened yet again.  
And there was nought around them but the  
grey

Ruin and roar of huge Atlantic seas.  
And only like a memory of the world  
They left behind them rose the same great sun,  
And daily rolled his chariot through their sky,  
Whereof the skilled musicians made a song.

## SONG.

The same sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other,  
Wherever we be;  
With the same goal before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Ringed round with the sea.

When the breakers charged thundering  
In thousands all round us  
With a lightning of lances  
Uphurtled on high,  
When the stout ships were sundering  
A rapture hath crowned us,  
Like the wild light that dances  
On the crests that flash by.

When the waters lay breathless  
Gazing at Hesper  
Guarding the golden  
Fruit of the tree,  
Heard we the deathless  
Wonderful whisper  
Wafting the olden  
Dream of the sea.

No land in the ring of it  
Now, all around us  
Only the splendid  
Resurging unknown !  
How should we sing of it ?—  
This that hath found us  
By the great sun attended  
In splendour, alone.

Ah ! the broad miles of it,  
White with the onset  
Of waves without number  
Warring for glee.

Ah ! the soft smiles of it  
Down to the sunset,  
Holy for slumber,  
The peace of the sea.

The wave's heart, exalted,  
Leaps forward to meet us,  
The sun on the sea-wave  
Lies white as the moon :  
The soft sapphire-vaulted  
Deep heaven smiles to greet us,  
Free sons of the free-wave  
All singing one tune.

*The same sun is o'er us,  
The same Love shall find us,  
The same and none other,  
Wherever we be;  
With the same goal before us,  
The same home behind us,  
England, our mother,  
Queen of the sea.*

At last a faint-flushed April Dawn arose  
With milk-white arms up-binding golden  
clouds  
Of fragrant hair behind her lovely head;  
And lo, before the bright black plunging prows  
The whole sea suddenly shattered into shoals  
Of rolling porpoises. Everywhere they tore  
The glittering water. Like a moving crowd  
Of black bright rocks washed smooth by  
foaming tides,

They thrilled the unconscious fancy of the  
crews

With subtle, wild, and living hints of land.  
And soon Columbus' happy signals came,  
The signs that saved him when his mutineers  
Despaired at last and clamoured to return,—  
And there, with awe triumphant in their eyes,  
They saw, lazily tossing on the tide,  
A drift of seaweed and a berried branch,  
Which silenced them as if they had seen a  
Hand

Writing with fiery letters on the deep.

Then a black cormorant, vulture of the sea,  
With neck outstretched and one long ominous  
*honk*,

Went hurtling past them to its unknown  
bourne.

A mighty white-winged albatross came next;  
Then flight on flight of clamorous clanging  
gulls;

And last, a wild and sudden shout of  
“Land!”

Echoed from crew to crew across the waves.  
Then, dumb upon the rigging as they hung  
Staring at it, a menace chilled their blood.  
For like *Il Gran Nemico* of Dante, dark,  
Ay, coloured like a thunder-cloud, from North  
To South, in front, there slowly rose to sight  
A country like a dragon fast asleep  
Along the West, with wrinkled, purple wings  
Ending in ragged forests o'er its spine;  
And with great craggy claws out-thrust, that  
turned

(As the dim distances dissolved their veils)  
To promontories bounding a huge bay.  
There o'er the hushed and ever shallower tide  
The staring ships drew nigh and thought,  
“Is this  
The Dragon of our Golden Apple Tree,  
The guardian of the fruit of our desire

Which grows in gardens of the Hesperides  
Where those three sisters weave a white-  
armed dance  
Around it everlastingly, and sing  
Strange songs in a strange tongue that still  
convey  
Warning to heedful souls?" Nearer they  
drew,  
And now, indeed, from out a soft blue-grey  
Mingling of colours on that coast's deep flank  
There crept a garden of enchantment, height  
O'er height, a garden sloping from the hills,  
Wooded as with Aladdin's trees that bore  
All-coloured clustering gems instead of fruit;  
Now vaster as it grew upon their eyes,  
And like some Roman amphitheatre  
Cirque above mighty cirque all round the bay,  
With jewels and flowers ablaze on women's  
breasts  
Innumerably confounded and confused;

While lovely faces flushed with lust of blood,  
Rank above rank upon their tawny thrones  
In soft barbaric splendour lapped, and lulled  
By the low thunderings of a thousand lions,  
Luxuriously smiled as they bent down  
Over the scarlet-splashed and steaming sands  
To watch the white-limbed gladiators die.

..

Such fears and dreams for Francis Drake,  
at least,  
Rose and dissolved in his nigh fevered brain  
As they drew near that equatorial shore;  
For rumours had been borne to him; and now  
He knew not whether to impute the wrong  
To his untrustful mind or to believe  
Doughty a traitorous liar; for the sense  
Of his own friendship towards him made it  
hard  
To understand that treachery; yet there  
seemed

Proof and to spare. A thousand shadows rose  
To mock him with their veiled indicative  
hands.

And each alone he laid and exorcised  
With ease; but ah, not all, not all at once.  
And for each doubt he banished, one returned  
From darker depths to mock him o'er again.

So, in that bay, the little fleet sank sail  
And anchored; and the wild reality  
Behind those dreams towered round them on  
the hills,

Or so it seemed. And Drake bade lower a  
boat,

And went ashore with sixteen men to seek  
Water; and, as they neared the embowered  
beach,

Over the green translucent tide there came,  
A hundred yards from land, a drowsy sound  
Immeasurably repeated and prolonged,

As of innumerable elfin drums  
Dreamily mustering in the tropic bloom.  
This from without they heard, across the  
waves ;

But when they glided into a flowery creek  
Under the sharp black shadows of the trees—  
Jaca and Mango and Palm and red festoons  
Of gaflanded Liana wreaths—it ebbed  
Into the murmur of the mighty fronds,  
Prodigious leaves whose veinings bore the  
fresh  
Impression of the finger-prints of God.  
There humming-birds, like flakes of purple  
fire  
Upon some passing seraph's plumage, beat  
And quivered in blinding blots of golden light  
Between the embattled cactus and cardoon ;  
While one huge whisper of primeval awe  
Seemed to await the cool green eventide  
When God should walk His Garden as of old.

Now as the boats were plying to and fro  
Between the ships and that enchanted shore,  
Drake bade his comrades tarry a little and  
went

Apart, alone, into the trackless woods.  
Tormented with his thoughts, he saw all  
round

Once more the battling image of his mind,  
Where there was nought of man, only the vast  
Unending silent struggle of Titan trees,  
Large internecine twistings of the world,  
The hushed death-grapple and the still intense  
Locked anguish of Laocoons that gripped  
Death by the throat for thrice three hundred  
years.

Once, like a subtle mockery overhead,  
Some black-armed chattering ape swung  
swiftly by,  
But he strode onward, thinking—"Was it  
false,

False all that kind outreaching of the  
hands?

False? Was there nothing certain, nothing  
sure

In those divinest aisles and towers of Time  
Wherein we took sweet counsel? Is there  
nought

Sure 'but the solid dust beneath our feet?  
Must all those lovelier fabrics of the soul,  
Being so divinely bright and delicate,  
Waver and shine no longer than some poor  
Prismatic aery bubble? Ay, they burst,  
And all their glory shrinks into one tear  
No bitterer than some idle love-lorn maid  
Sheds for her dead canary. God, it hurts,  
This, this hurts most, to think how we must  
miss

What might have been, for nothing but a  
breath,

A babbling of the tongue, an argument,

Or such a poor contention as involves  
The thrones and dominations of this earth,—  
How many of us, like seed on barren ground,  
Must miss the flower and harvest of their  
prayers,  
The living light of friendship and the grasp  
Which for its very meaning once implied  
Eternities of utterance and the life •  
Immortal of two souls beyond the grave ? ”

Now, wandering upward ever, he reached and  
clomb  
The slope side of a fern-fringed precipice,  
And, at the summit, found an open glade,  
Whence, looking o'er the forest, he beheld  
The sea ; and, in the land-locked bay below,  
Far, far below, his elfin-tiny ships,  
All six at anchor on the crawling tide !  
Then onward, upward, through the woods  
once more

He plunged with bursting heart and burning  
brow;  
And, once again, like madness, the black  
shapes  
Of doubt swung through his brain and  
chattered and laughed,  
Till he upstretched his arms in agony  
And cursed the name of Doughty, cursed the  
day  
They met, cursed his false face and courtier  
smiles;  
“For oh,” he cried, “how easy a thing it were  
For truth to wear the garb of truth! This  
proves  
His treachery!” And there, at once, his  
thoughts  
Tore him another way, as thus, “And yet  
If he were false, is he not subtle enough  
To hide it? Why, this proves his inno-  
cence—

This very courtly carelessness which I,  
Black-hearted evil-thinker as I am,  
In my own clumsier spirit so misjudge!  
These children of the court are butterflies  
Fluttering hither and thither, and I—poor  
fool—  
Would fix them to a stem and call them  
flowers,  
Nay, bid them grasp the ground like tower-  
ing oaks  
And shadow all the zenith;” and yet again  
The madness of distrustful friendship gleamed  
From his fierce eyes, “Oh villain, damnèd  
villain,  
God’s murrain on his heart! I know full well  
He hides what he can hide! He wears no  
fault  
Upon the gloss and frippery of his breast!  
It is not that! It is the hidden things,  
Unseizable, the things I do not know,

Ay, it is these, these, these and these alone  
That I mistrust."

And, as he walked, the skies  
Grew full of threats, and now enormous clouds  
Rose mammoth-like above the ensanguined  
deep, •

Trampling the daylight out; and, with its  
death

Dyed purple, rushed along as if they meant  
To obliterate the world. He took no heed.  
Though that strange blackness brimmed the  
branching aisles

With horror, he strode on till in the gloom,  
Just as his winding way came out once more  
Over a precipice that o'erlooked the bay,  
There, as he went, not gazing down, but up,  
He saw what seemed a ponderous granite cliff,  
A huge ribbed shell upon a lonely shore  
Left by forgotten mountains when they sank  
Back to earth's breast like billows on a sea.

A tall and whispering crowd of tree-ferns  
waved

Mysterious fringes round it. In their midst  
He flung himself at its broad base, with one  
Sharp shivering cry of pain, "Show me Thy  
ways,

O God, teach me Thy paths! I am in the  
dark!

Lighten my darkness!"

Almost as he spoke  
There swept across the forest, far and wide,  
Gathering power and volume as it came,  
A sound as of a rushing mighty wind;  
And, overhead, like great black gouts of blood  
Wrung from the awful forehead of the Night  
The first drops fell and ceased. Then, sud-  
denly,

Out of the darkness, earth with all her seas,  
Her little ships at anchor in the bay  
(Five ebony ships upon a sheet of silver,

Drake saw not that, indeed, Drake saw not  
that!),

Her woods, her boughs, her leaves, her  
tiniest twigs, .

Leapt like a hunted stag through one im-  
mense

Lightning of revelation into the murk  
Of Erebus: then heaven o'er rending heaven  
Shattered and crashed down ruin over the  
world.

But, in that deeper darkness, Francis Drake  
Stood upright now, and with blind out-  
stretched arms

Groped at that strange forgotten cliff and shell  
Of mystery; for in that flash of light  
Æons had passed; and now the Thing in front  
Made his blood freeze with memories that lay  
Behind his Memory. In the gloom he groped,  
And with dark hands that knew not what  
they knew,

As one that shelters in the night, unknowing,  
Beneath a stranded shipwreck, with a cry  
He touched the enormous rain-washed belted  
ribs

And bones like battlements of some Mastodon  
Embedded there until the trump of doom.

After long years, long centuries, perchance,  
Triumphantly some other pioneer  
Would stand where Drake now stood and  
read the tale

Of ages where he only felt the cold  
Touch in the dark of some huge mystery;  
Yet Drake might still be nearer to the light  
Who now was whispering from his great  
deep heart,

“Show me Thy ways, O God, teach me  
Thy paths!”

And there by some strange instinct, oh, he felt  
God’s answer there, as if he grasped a hand

Across a gulf of twice ten thousand years;  
And he regained his lost magnificence  
Of faith in that great Harmony which re-  
solves  
Our discords, faith through all the ruthless  
laws  
Of nature in their lovely pitilessness,  
Faith in that Love which outwardly must  
wear,  
Through all the sorrows of eternal change,  
The splendour of the indifference of God.

All round him through the heavy purple  
gloom  
Sloped the soft rush of silver-arrowed rain,  
Loosening the skies' hard anguish as with  
tears.  
Once more he felt his unity with all  
The vast composure of the universe,  
And drank deep at the fountains of that peace

Which comprehends the tumult of our days.  
But with that peace the power to act re-  
turned;

And, with his back against the Mastodon,  
He stared through the great darkness tow'rds  
the sea.

The rain ceased for a moment: only the slow  
Drip of the dim droop-feathered palms all  
round

Deepened the hush.

Then, out of the gloom once more  
The whole earth leapt to sight with all her  
woods,

Her boughs, her leaves, her tiniest twigs  
distinct

For one wild moment; but Drake only saw  
The white flash of her seas and there, oh  
there

That land-locked bay with those five elfin ships,  
Five elfin ebony ships upon a sheet

Of wrinkled silver! Then, as the thunder  
followed,

One thought burst through his brain—

• *Where was the sixth?*

Over the grim precipitous edge he hung,  
An eagle waiting for the lightning now  
To swoop upon his prey. One iron hand  
Gripped a rough tree-root like a bunch of  
snakes;

And, as the rain rushed round him, far away  
He saw to northward yet another flash,  
A scribble of God's finger in the sky  
Over a waste of white stampeding waves.

His eye flashed like a falchion as he saw it,  
And from his lips there burst the sea-king's  
laugh; .

For there, with a fierce joy he knew, he knew  
Doughty, at last—an open mutineer!  
An open foe to fight! Ay, there she went,—  
His *Golden Hynde*, his little *Golden Hynde*

A wild deserter scudding to the North.  
And, almost ere the lightning, Drake had gone  
Crashing down the face of the precipice,  
By a narrow water-gully, and through the huge  
Forest he tore the straight and perilous way  
Down to the shore; while, three miles to  
the North,  
Upon the wet poop of the *Golden Hynde*  
Doughty stood smiling. Scarce would he  
have smiled  
Knowing that Drake had seen him from that  
tower  
Amidst the thunders; but, indeed, he thought  
He had escaped unseen amidst the storm.  
Many a day he had worked upon the crew,  
Fanning their fears and doubts until he won  
The more part to his side. And when they  
reached  
That coast, he showed them how Drake  
meant to sail

Southward, into the unknown Void; but he  
Would have them suddenly slip by stealth  
away

Northward to Darien, showing them what a  
life

Of golden glory waited for them there,  
If, laying aside this empty quest, they joined  
The merry feasters round those island fires  
Which over many a dark-blue creek illumed  
Buccaneer camps in scarlet logwood groves,  
Fringing the Gulf of Mexico, till dawn  
Summoned the Black Flags out to sweep  
the sea.

But when Drake reached the flower-em-  
bowered boat,  
And found the men awaiting his return  
There, in a sheltering grove of bread-fruit  
trees  
Beneath great eaves of leafage that obscured

Their sight, but kept the storm out, as they  
tossed

Pieces of eight or rattled the bone dice,  
His voice went through them like a thunder-  
bolt,

For none of them had seen the *Golden Hynde*  
Steal from the bay; and now the billows  
burst

Like cannon down the coast; and they had  
thought

Their boat could not be launched until the  
storm

Abated. Under Drake's compelling eyes,  
Nevertheless, they poled her down the creek  
Without one word, waiting their chance.

Then all

Together with their brandished oars they  
thrust,

And on the fierce white out-draught of a  
wave

They shot up, up and over the toppling crest  
Of the next, and plunged crashing into the  
vale

Behind it: then they settled at their thwarts,  
And the fierce water boiled before their blades  
As, with Drake's iron hand upon the helm,  
They soared and crashed across the rolling  
seas.

Not for the Spanish prize did Drake now  
steer,

But for that little ship the *Marygold*,  
Swiftest of sail, next to the *Golden Hynde*,  
And, in the hands of Francis Drake, indeed  
Swiftest of all; and ere the seamen knew  
What power, as of a wind, bore them along,  
Anchor was up, their hands were on the  
sheets,

The sails were broken out, the *Marygold*  
Was flying like a storm-cloud to the North,

And on her poop an iron statue still  
As death stood Francis Drake.

One hour they rushed  
Northward, with green seas washing o'er the  
deck

And buffeted with splendour; then they saw  
The *Golden Hynde* like some wing-broken gull  
With torn mismanaged plumes beating the air  
In peril of utter shipwreck; saw her fly  
Half-mast, a feeble signal of distress  
Despite all Doughty's curses; for her crew  
With wild divisions torn amongst themselves  
Most gladly now surrendered in their hearts,  
As close alongside grandly onward swept  
The *Marygold*, with canvas trim and taut  
Magnificently drawing the full wind,  
Her gunners waiting at their loaded guns  
Bare-armed and silent; and that iron soul  
Alone, upon her silent quarter-deck.  
There they hauled up into the wind and lay

Rocking, while Drake, alone, without a guard,  
Boarding the runaway, dismissed his boat  
Back to the *Marygold*. Then his voice out-  
rang

Trumpet-like o'er the trembling mutineers,  
And clearly, as if they were but busied still  
About the day's routine. They hid their  
shame,

As men that would propitiate a god,  
By flying to fulfil his lightest word;  
And ere they knew what power, as of a  
wind

Impelled them—that half wreck was trim  
and taut,

Her sails all drawing and her bows afoam;  
And, creeping past the *Marygold* once more,  
She led their Southward way! And not till  
then

Did Drake vouchsafe one word to the white  
face

Of Doughty, as he furtively slunk nigh  
With some new lie upon his fear-parched  
lips

Thirsting for utterance in his crackling laugh  
Of deprecation; and with one ruffling puff  
Of pigeon courage in his blinded soul—  
“I am no sea-dog—even Francis Drake  
Would scarce misuse a gentleman. Thank  
God

I am a gentleman!” And there Drake  
turned  
And summoned four swart seamen out by  
name.

His words went like a cold wind through  
their flesh

As with a passionless voice he slowly said,  
“Take ye this fellow: bind him to the mast  
Until what time I shall decide his fate.”  
And Doughty gasped as at the world’s blank  
end,—

“Nay, Francis,” cried he, “wilt thou thus  
misuse

A gentleman?” But as the seamen gripped  
His arms he struggled vainly and furiously  
To throw them off; and in his impotence  
Let slip the whole of his treacherous cause  
and hope

In empty wrath,—“Fore God,” he foamed  
and snarled,

“Ye shall all smart for this when we return!  
Unhand me, dogs! I have Lord Burleigh’s  
power

Behind me. There is nothing I have done  
Without his warrant! Ye shall smart for this!  
Unhand me, I say, unhand me!”

And in one flash  
Drake saw the truth, and Doughty saw his  
eyes

Lighten upon him; and his false heart  
quailed

Once more; and he suddenly suffered himself  
Quietly, strangely, to be led away  
And bound without a murmur to the mast.  
And strangely Drake remembered, as those  
words,

“Ye shall all smart for this when we return,”  
Yelped at his faith, how while the Dover cliffs  
Faded from sight he leaned to his new friend  
Doughty and said: “I blame them not who  
stay!

I blame them not at all who cling to home,  
For many of us, indeed, shall not return,  
Nor ever know that sweetness any more.”

And when they had reached their anchorage  
anew,

Drake, having now resolved to bring his fleet  
Beneath a more compact control, at once  
Took all the men and the chief guns and  
stores

From out the Spanish prize; and sent Tom  
Moone

To set the hulk afire. Also he bade  
Unbind the traitor and ordered him aboard  
The pinnace *Christopher*. John Doughty, too,  
He ordered thither, into the grim charge  
Of old Tom Moone, thinking it best to keep  
The poisonous leaven carefully apart  
Until they had won well Southward, to a  
place

Where, finally committed to their quest,  
They might arraign the traitor without fear  
Or favour, and acquit him or condemn.  
But those two brothers, doubting as the  
false

Are damned to doubt, saw murder in his  
eyes,  
And thought "He means to sink the smack  
one night,"  
And they refused to go, till Drake abruptly

Ordered them straightway to be slung on  
board  
With ropes.

The daylight wan'd; but ere the sun  
Sank, the five ships were plunging to the  
South;

For Drake would halt no longer, lest the  
crews

Also should halt betwixt two purposes.

He took the tide of fortune at the flood;  
And onward through the now subsiding  
storm,

Ere they could think what power as of a  
wind

Impelled them, he had swept them on their  
way.

Far, far into the night they saw the blaze  
That leapt in crimson o'er the abandoned hulk  
Behind them, like a mighty hecatomb  
Marking the path of some Titanic will.

Many a night and day they Southward drove.  
Sometimes at midnight round them all the sea  
Quivered with witches' oils and water snakes,  
Green, blue, and red, with lambent tongues  
of fire.

Mile upon mile about the blurred black hulls  
A cauldron of tempestuous colour coiled.  
On every mast mysterious meteors burned,  
And from the shores a bellowing rose and fell  
As of great bestial gods that walked all night  
Through some wild hell unknown, too vast  
for men;

But when the silver and crimson of the dawn  
Broke out, they saw the tropic shores anew,  
The fair white foam, and, round about the  
rocks,

Weird troops of tusked sea-lions; and the  
world

Mixed with their dreams and made them  
stranger still.

And, once, so fierce a tempest scattered the  
fleet

That even the hardiest souls began to think  
There was a Jonah with them; for the seas  
Rose round them like green mountains,  
peaked and ridged

With heights of Alpine snow amongst the  
clouds;

And many a league to Southward, when the  
ships

Gathered again amidst the sinking waves  
Four only met. The ship of Thomas Drake  
Was missing; and some thought it had  
gone down

With all hands in the storm. But Francis  
Drake

Held on his way, learning from hour to hour  
To merge himself in immortality;  
Learning the secret of those pitiless laws  
Which dwarf all mortal grief, all human pain,

To something less than nothing by the side  
Of that eternal travail dimly guessed,  
Since first he felt in the miraculous dark  
The great bones of the Mastodon, that hulk  
Of immemorial death. He learned to judge  
The passing pageant of this outward world  
As by the touch-stone of that memory;  
Even as in that country which some said  
Lay now not far, the great Tezcucan king,  
Resting his jewelled hand upon a skull,  
And on a smouldering glory of jewels throned  
There in his temple of the Unknown God  
Over the host of Aztec princes, clad  
In golden hauberks gleaming under soft  
Surcoats of green or scarlet feather-work,  
Could in the presence of a mightier power  
Than life or death give up his guilty sons,  
His only sons, to the sacrificial sword.  
And hour by hour the soul of Francis Drake,  
Unconscious as an oak-tree of its growth,

Increased in strength and stature as he drew  
Earth, heaven, and hell within him, more  
and more.

For as the dream we call 'our world, with all  
Its hues is but a picture in the brain,  
So did his soul enfold the universe  
With gradual sense of superhuman power,  
While every visible shape within the vast  
Horizon seemed the symbol of some thought  
Waiting for utterance. He had found indeed  
God's own Nirvana, not of empty dream  
But of intensest life! Nor did he think  
Aught of all this; but, as the rustic deems  
The colours that he carries in his brain  
Are somehow all outside him while he peers  
Unaltered through two windows in his face,  
Drake only knew that as the four ships  
plunged  
Southward, the world mysteriously grew  
More like a prophet's vision, hour by hour,

Fraught with dark omens and significances,  
A world of hieroglyphs and sacred signs  
Wherein he seemed to read the truth that lay  
Hid from the Roman augurs when of old  
They told the future from the flight of birds.  
How vivid with disaster seemed the flight  
Of those blood-red flamingoes o'er the dim  
Blue steaming forest, like two terrible thoughts  
Flashing, unapprehended, through his brain !

And now, as they drove Southward, day and  
night,  
Through storm and calm, the shores that  
fleeted by  
Grew wilder, grander, with his growing soul,  
And pregnant with the approaching mystery.  
And now along the Patagonian coast  
They cruised, and in the solemn midnight  
saw  
Wildernesses of shaggy barren marl,

Petrified seas of lava, league on league,  
Craters and bouldered slopes and granite  
cliffs

With ragged rents, grim gorges, deep ravines,  
And precipice on precipice up-piled  
Innumerable to those dim distances  
Where, over valleys hanging in the clouds,  
Gigantic mountains and volcanic peaks  
Catching the wefts of cirrus fleece appeared  
To smoke against the sky, though all was  
now

Dead as that frozen chaos of the moon,  
Or some huge passion of a slaughtered soul  
Prostrate under the marching of the stars.

At last, and in a silver dawn, they came  
Suddenly on a broad-winged estuary,  
And, in the midst of it, an island lay.  
There they found shelter, on its leeward side,  
And Drake convened upon the *Golden Hynde*

His dread court-martial. Two long hours  
he heard

Defence and accusation, then broke up  
The conclave, and, with burning heart and  
brain, .

Feverishly seeking everywhere some sign  
To guide him, went ashore upon that isle,  
And lo, turning a rugged point of rock,  
He rubbed his eyes to find out if he  
dreamed,

For there—a Crusoe's wonder, a miracle,  
A sign—before him stood on that lone strand  
Stark, with a stern arm pointing out his way  
And jangling still one withered skeleton,  
The grim black gallows where Magellan  
hanged .

His mutineers. Its base was white with bones  
Picked by the gulls, and crumbling o'er the  
sand

A dread sea-salt, dry from the tides of time.

There, on that lonely shore, Death's finger-post

Stood like some old forgotten truth made  
strange

By the long lapse of many memories,

All starting up in resurrection now

As at the trump of doom, heroic ghosts

Out of the cells and graves of his deep brain

Reproaching him. "Were this man not thy

*friend,*

*Ere now he should have died the traitor's death.*

*What wilt thou say to the others if they, too,*

*Prove false? Or wilt thou slay the lesser and save*

*The greater sinner? Nay, if thy right hand*

*Offend thee, cut it off!"* And, in one flash,

Drake saw his path and chose it.

### With a voice

Low as the passionless anguished voice of  
Fate

That comprehends all pain, but girds it round

With iron, lest some random cry break out  
For man's misguidance, he drew all his men  
Around him, saying, "Ye all know how I  
loved

Doughty, who hath betrayed me twice and  
thrice,

For I still trusted him: he was no felon  
That I should turn my heart away from him !  
He is the type and image of man's laws;  
While I—am lawless as the soul that still  
Must sail and seek a world beyond the worlds,  
A law behind earth's laws. I dare not judge !  
But ye—who know the mighty goal we seek,  
Who have seen him sap our courage, hour  
by hour,

Till God Himself almost appeared a dream  
Behind his technicalities and doubts  
Of aught he could not touch or handle; ye  
Who have seen him stir up jealousy and strife  
Between our seamen and our gentlemen,

Even as the world stirs up continual strife,  
Bidding the man forget he is a man  
With God's own patent of nobility;  
Ye who have seen him strike this last sharp  
blow—

Sharper than any enemy hath struck,—  
Ay, Jonathan, mine own familiar friend,  
He whom I trusted, he alone could strike  
So sharply, for indeed I loved this man.  
Judge ye—for see, I cannot. Do not doubt  
I loved this man!

But now, if ye will let him have his life,  
Oh, speak! But, if ye think it must be  
death,  
Hold up your hands in silence!" His voice  
dropped,

And eagerly he whispered forth one word  
Beyond the scope of Fate—"Yet, oh, my  
friends,  
I would not have him die!" There was no  
sound

Save the long thunder of eternal seas,—  
Drake bowed his head and prayed.

Then, suddenly,  
One man upheld his hand; and, all at once,  
A brawny forest of brown arms arose  
In silence, and the great sea whispered *Death*.

There, with one big swift impulse, Francis  
Drake

Held out his right sun-blackened hand and  
gripped

The hand that Doughty proffered him; and lo,  
Doughty laughed out and said, “Since I  
must die,

Let us have one more hour of comradeship,  
One hour as old companions. Let us make  
A feast here, on this island, ere I go  
Where there is no more feasting.” So they  
made

A great and solemn banquet as the day  
Decreased; and Doughty bade them all unlock

Their sea-chests and bring out their rich array.

There, by that wondering ocean of the West,  
In crimson doublets, lined and slashed with  
gold,

In broidered lace and double golden chains  
Embossed with rubies and great cloudy pearls  
They feasted, gentleman adventurers,  
Drinking old malmsey, as the sun sank down.

Now Doughty, fronting the rich death of day,  
And flourishing a silver pouncet-box  
With many a courtly jest and rare conceit,  
There as he sat in rich attire, out-braved  
The rest. Though darker-hued, yet richer far,  
His murrey-coloured doublet, double-piled  
Of Genoa velvet, puffed with ciprus, shone;  
For over its grave hues the gems that bossed  
His golden collar, wondrously relieved,  
Blazed lustrous to the West like stars. But

Drake

Wore simple black, with midnight silver  
slashed,

And, at his side, a great two-handed sword.

At last they rose, just as the sun's last rays  
Rested upon the heaving molten gold

Immeasurable. The long slow sigh of the  
waves

That creamed across the lonely time-worn reef

All round the island seemed the very voice

Of the Everlasting: black against the sea

The gallows of Magellan stretched its arm

With that gaunt skeleton and its rusty chain

Creaking and swinging in the solemn breath

Of eventide like some strange pendulum

Measuring out the moments that remained.

There did they take the holy sacrament

Of Jesus' body and blood. Then Doughty  
and Drake

Kissed each other, as brothers, on the cheek;

And Doughty knelt. And Drake, without one  
word,

Leaning upon the two-edged naked sword  
Stood at his side, with iron lips, and eyes  
Full of the sunset; while the doomed man  
bowed

His head upon a rock. The great sun  
dropped

Suddenly, and the land and sea were dark;  
And as it were a sign, Drake lifted up  
The gleaming sword. It seemed to sweep  
the heavens

Down in its arc as he smote, once, and no  
more.

Then, for a moment, silence froze their veins,  
Till one fierce seaman stooped with a hoarse  
cry;

And, like an eagle clutching up its prey,  
His arm swooped down and bore the head  
aloft,

Gorily streaming, by the long dark hair;  
And a great shout went up, "So perish all

Traitors to God and England." Then Drake  
turned

And bade them to their ships ; and, wondering,  
They left him. As the boats thrust out from  
shore

Brave old Tom Moone looked back with faith-  
ful eyes

Like a great mastiff to his master's face.  
He, looming larger from his loftier ground  
Clad with the slowly gathering night of stars  
And gazing sea-ward o'er his quiet dead,  
Seemed like some Titan bronze in grandeur  
based

Unshakeable until the crash of doom  
Shattered the black foundations of the world.

**PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.**

# THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN.

BY ALFRED NOYES.

---

## *PRESS OPINIONS.*

***The Times.***—Mr Noyes so charges it with fascination and terror and kaleidoscopic colour, that most readers, we dare to promise, will take its ninety pages at a sitting and turn back to read again. We said just now that he has a fine eye for colour, and will quote a couple of stanzas in proof.....But, indeed, quotation does injustice to a poem which owes its effectiveness to the piling up of picture upon picture with such rapidity that the reader might imagine himself jingling in a palanquin down the long avenue of an Eastern bazaar heaped with silks, tea-chests, trays of jewels, vases, fans, sun-shades, carved ivories, and lacquered arms, and thronged with merchants, seamen, bonzes, pirates, apes, macaws, and mandarins. And through all, as befits the story of a childish dream, there runs an exquisite sense of terror. Also the dream manages to keep throughout the inconsecutiveness proper to dreams—and yet has an artistic unity .....filled with magic and beauty.

***The Spectator.***—It is much easier to imagine than to put into words what Mr Noyes means by his 'Flower of Old Japan.' Some of us, perhaps, can remember how we built romances out of the oddities of a "willow-pattern" plate. If so, we shall be able to understand Mr Noyes.....[Quotation.].....The fact is, that the charm of the verse eludes us when we try to describe it. We feel it; but we cannot exactly say why, or define it in any intelligible way. Shall we say that it reminds us of 'Alice in Wonderland'? It does after a fashion, though it is not in the least an imitation; and it differs, too, in having a certain seriousness in its phantasy.

# THE LOOM OF YEARS.

BY ALFRED NOYES.

---

## PRESS OPINIONS.

*The Times* (in a review of a column and a half).—Extraordinary promise. .... His singing puts one in mind of the lads commemorated in Stevenson's alcâics :—

“Brave lads in olden musical centuries  
Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,  
Sat late by alehouse doors in April  
Chanting in joy as the moon was rising”

*The Standard*.—Mr Noyes is something of a symbolist and something of a mystic. Several of his poems breathe that strange yearning for the Infinite and the elusive, that

“Desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,”

which is perceptible in so much that is most interesting in the contemporary poetry of England and France. It is characteristic of the whole school that, like their exemplar, Shelley, they are studiously and deliberately vague. Sometimes they are apt to become so esoteric that only the initiated can understand them. This, however, is not the case with Mr Noyes, whose style is lucid and simple.

*The Speaker*.—To read it is to pass with delight from one beauty to another to the very end of the volume. No ill-wrought line, no overstrained expression, no lapse of melody, offends the eye and ear, for Mr Noyes, of whom we know nothing beyond this book, is a sure and cunning workman, with a fine technical command of his material. [Quotation.] .... That has a magical charm; fine thought is wedded to a haunting rhythm, and the music vibrates and vibrates away, and is caught and repeated, and fades and swells as the hand of a poet touches the strings. .... Mr Noyes is a poet. No other word is adequate.

*George Meredith*.—“Michael Oaktree” is worthy of praise, not only as a performance, but also as an intimation of strength coming.









